FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Body, Mind & Spirit

Love Is Strong as Death: Moving Through Grief
James Dillet Freeman
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When he was told his wife would die within a year of cancer, this poet and minister's "…first impulse was toward the telephone./ …The heart breaks that leaves unsaid/ Sorrow too great for silence, breaks with pain./ My call went through. Someone I loved was there./ I seized her voice and gulped it in like air."

This book is a collection of sixty-nine poems and one essay. More than that, however, it is a hand held out to a journey that all must take.

Freeman has written extensively for Unity Ministries as well as being published in secular arenas such as The New Yorker, Saturday Review, New York Times and Readers' Digest. In September of 1948 he lost his wife, Katherine, to cancer and began this chronicle of his journey through her illness and after her death. His telling of the story never shirks the soul-searing anguish, the dislocation in which such loss cocoons a survivor's being. For the reader who is sorrowing, Freeman's story is a companion that abides, that hears the struggle and does not flinch.

"Seeing her pain I wanted her to die,/ But clung to her as if by clinging I/ Might draw her back from that relentless clutch./ I wanted her, I wanted her so much." But slowly, slowly, Freeman unwinds the cocoon to the paradox at life's core, that love is indeed as strong as death, that "…Before Impossibles the soul may fail yet soar."

The journey recounted is not only that of the spouse, caretaker, survivor but also of the interaction between Katherine and Jim — of how each participated in the other's voyage, how they reached for the other and also withdrew, how their love and their grief grew stronger at the same time.

The poetry is never obscure. The references are ones we all understand. The words and meter and forms of the various poems are varied, appropriate to the tension, relief or enlightenment that are the fabric of this journey. This book is a ministry to those who are taking

this journey, as well as those who care for the caretakers and survivors. For someone in such a place, it could be the voice one gulps in like air. (December, 1999)

Emmy Lou Belcher