**Clarion Review**

Body, Mind & Spirit

**The Teacher: Life's Tsunami**
Cary Eggleston
978-1-4259-9297-2
Four Stars (out of Five)

The people on the beach when the great tsunami surged ashore in Banda Aceh Indonesia no longer need lessons on navigating through life. The rest of us who were at a safe distance or had a solid tree to cling to filed away a new piece of wisdom. Every time a catastrophe threatens erasure or tests our resolution to breaking there is an unmatched chance to learn and leap forward. *The Teacher: Life's Tsunami* delivers nine lessons derived from crises and tragedies of immense gravity—the death of a child robbery at gunpoint trauma subverted into a buried memory. It cuts through the Gordian knot of despair which people become entangled in trying to understand *why* sociopaths do terrible things suggesting that line of inquiry is fruitless: "…an insane person cannot be understood by a sane person without the sane person going crazy. We should not pray for understanding but for compassion for those beyond understanding."

The conflict of human versus nature yields some of this book's best articulated passages. Accounts of Coast Guard service on the Great Lakes are apt maritime parables. The image of a young crewman reading about the thirty-five foot sister waves that sunk the Edmund Fitzgerald while aboard a cutter which nearly rolls over is equivalent to watching an in-flight movie about a plane crash. Situations here can be ironic or paradoxical as is human nature. Eggleston's crewmate howls against the madly swirling high waters he both fears and is drawn to: "He was terrified of drowning but just couldn't leave the sea." Reasonably humorous prose prevails whenever the subject isn't too dark. Eggleston explains unlikely instances of survival with a very softly advanced faith-based argument saying "I truly believe that God works from around the corner."

A bit mystifying is overuse of single 'emphasis' quotation marks bold print and italics as well. The author displays conscious self-awareness through the single ineffective section—shameless praise of taste-maker Oprah Winfrey suggesting that she may be the only billionaire fit for admission to heaven. The odds of this unsolicited brownnose strategy yielding

a book club selection are only barely more favorable.

The credential of teacher is one Eggleston awards himself based on a trail of knowledge and the school of hard-knocks. He isn't being presumptuous at all pointing out that every person in the world has the capacity and qualifications to teach others. One has to respect the frank quasi-disclaimer: "99.9 of the following is true…however out of that 99.9 80 of it may be embellished a bit for artistic flair." He's a grown-up version of the wisecracking buddy who made a joke out of everything but then offered up an observation which cut directly to the heart of matters. It may take an effort to realign to Cary Eggleston's wavelength but that's a very good place to be.

*Todd Mercer*