

Window

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Time magazine asks “Is God dead?”

And, Dad, you wonder.

Digesting

The United Church Observer,

Buber’s philosophy,

Modern European Poetry,

The Screwtape Letters.

A workingman, writing a ‘window’

early death.

Decades pass your tattered poems mute

scrawled on

graph paper, foolscap, manila,

Safeway and *Super Value* writing tablets,

used envelopes, *Travel Lodge* notepaper,

orange *Daily Colonist* stop delivery notices,

a *Miracle Sandwich Spread* box top.

Your window, my gift,

my professorship, your dream.

Inspiration and Biography

Inquiring through and with poetry enables me to reflect on my relationship with my father after his death. This poem focuses on my father's desire to belong to the world of ideas, and the legacy he left me. A workingman who died at a young age more than 40 years ago, he passionately pursued knowledge and justice through philosophy and poetry. Although he prized higher education, for financial reasons he was unable to attend university. He wrote poetry and essays as a way to process his experiences, and his writings are now part of my research. They enable me to know him better and to link my early home experiences to the world of higher education. I am an Associate Professor (arts education) at Memorial University. I am interested in how this inquiry deepens my thinking about research, writing and teaching. Through the lens of poetry, I have been able to see beyond the received family history of who he was and get a more layered and nuanced picture not only of him, but also of the social forces that shaped him and in turn shaped me as a researcher and social activist.

The poem has been published as part of a paper:

McLeod, H., & Ruebsaat, G. (2014). "The Receiver No Longer Holds the Sound"
Parents, Poetry and the Voices We Create in the World. *Education*, 20(2), 27-49.
<http://ineducation.ca/ineducation/article/view/182>

The poem is also under consideration for publication:

McLeod, H. In Kathleen Quinlan (Ed.) *How Higher Education Feels: Poetry that Illuminates the Experiences of Learning, Teaching and Transformation*.