

I wrote this after my brother's passing. The poem will be published in the spring in a surfing magazine.

Death of a Sailor

Feel it, feel it deep in
the pit of the heart
plant this seed, embrace it
for the last breach
remembrance of brother Bill
a sailor adrift, waves
sweeping over vessel, this shell
that carried him to so many ports of call.
In Tahiti he stood at the crest of a two-story wave
Age 56 and grinning at this impending crush of gravity
you go, Bill!
Perfect form, surfing just beyond that spiraling blue monster
oh the defiance, then the blunder and curling thunder
surfboard ripped from ankle, you a doll in a bubbly trap
head bobbing before the setting sun
riptide pushing you out to sea
swim or die, swim or die, swim or die...
23 years removed from that travesty,
little brother is singing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" to
the shrinking man on the hospital bed
anything to ease the crossing
in child's pose
I ask the Goddess to
set him free
they say you closed
your eyes after the tumor squish

when infection hit
why fight it? right, Bill?
let nature take its course.
set the sails for that dark breeze
explore depths no one can reach
your soul stripped of need
not tethered to this reality,
riding that wave across the galaxy.

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