

W.D. Ehrhart

Sleeping with the Dead

I dreamed about you again last night.
This time, you were living in Tennessee,
on a horse farm, married, children
I think, it wasn't clear—you know
how dreams can be—but I finally
got you to see that I don't love you,
not like that: as if my world would end
without you in it.

O, to have been
so close, to have shared your bed, to have
felt like I'd been raised from the dead
after all those dead I slept with
every night. It almost drove me mad
to let you go.

But that was years ago.
You were nineteen then, and here I am
married nineteen years and sorry only
that I've never had the chance to tell you
that it's okay, that I'm okay,
that no one could have saved me then,
not you nor God, that I don't love you
anymore, but hope that someone does.

W.D. Ehrhart teaches English and history at the Haverford School in Pennsylvania. Several of the essays in his newest book, *The Madness of It All: Essays on War, Literature and American Life* (McFarland, 2002), originally appeared in **WLA**.