## 1945

It took me a long time to figure out what had happened It was before I was born but I was alive . . . 74 days waiting to be born look at the international dateline west to east Tuesday becomes Monday . . . Syracuse . . . New York Summer . . . 1945 . . . and a memory that haunted me for years about a moment in that day or night and what happened on a carrier out in the Pacific I didn't understand it . . . but it happened to me too Made up from stories I'd heard or real a flash of experience from him to me either way I remembered the instant of the wound that death that took all night dragged on then ended my uncle's life . . . my grandmother said she woke up with a splitting headache that lasted all night . . . when the headache went away she knew her son was dead . . . my father, the older brother, thought "It should have been me." Maybe I absorbed that too. I was born on a Monday at the end of October West to East . . . Tuesday becomes Monday One summer night when I was 19, I woke with a vision And, after that, I began to believe "This is my last year." Odd thoughts for a young man "Why am I alive?" "I'm supposed to be dead." "Why?" . . . "This year, then, will be the year I die." Ignored; forgotten . . . felt

Deep inside me . . . year after year

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When I first remembered what had happened
it was a memory of something that had actually happened
    to me
    whirling blades,
    closer and closer; hitting, cutting
It was real and it happened again
    I screamed and screamed
Elinor was there
                            we'd pulled out two other
buried, frozen memories
       I'd learned the mistakes a child's mind can make
and lock inside
                            real facts, re-felt
       understood differently
no longer hopeless brought out
    forgiven
    seen
                     accepted
put back in a different way
                                   healing
But this, the most terrible memory, remained a mystery
What had happened?
                            What did it mean?
Much later . . . it seemed to finally come together
A question from me
    "Where did that memory about the cutting blades come from?"
Some odd rituals . . . a trance . . . a possibility
A call and a revelation.
When I heard the date of his death
      I felt like I knew what had happened
I thought
    "The memory was real."
    "Somehow . . . for some reason
       as he received the wound that killed him
                                   and found me in the womb."
    he reached out
West to east
Somewhere inside I stopped believing
    "You're not supposed to be alive."
Somewhere inside, I started breathing
Now, even later . . . Monday October 18
    Tuesday October 19 out there
and . . . I don't know
But however it happened
I remembered
It happened to me too
2010
           Bill Eberle (William Caveny Eberle)
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for my uncle Bill (William Caveny Eberle)

For my uncle Bill (William Caveny Eberle, Jr.)

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