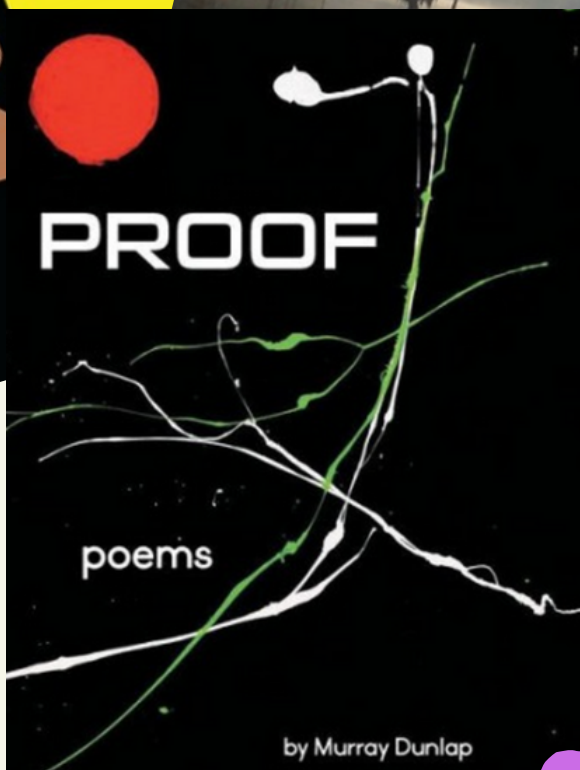



Brain Injury Survivor and Author Murray Dunlap

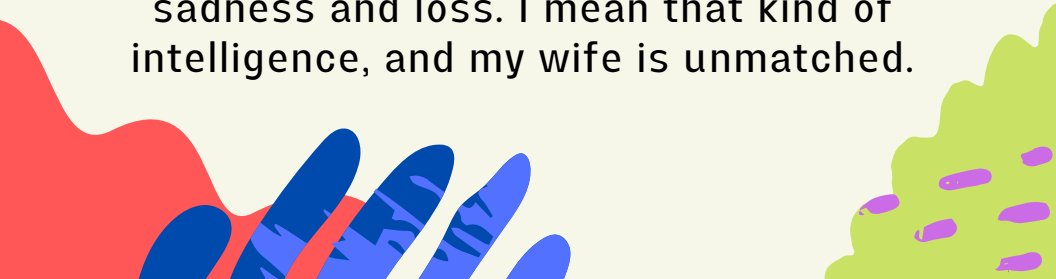




I am a white married man in my late 40's who has published four books and comes from a family of means. That said, right up front, you also need to know that in my mid-30's, a very nice man missed a red light and gave me a severe traumatic brain injury I will endure for the rest of my life. This fact makes me unreliable, un-hirable, and essentially unwanted. I fight with my very own brain every single day.

But that isn't all you need to know. I have also married an Episcopal priest, the very best decision of my life -before or after my wreck.

My wife admits to none of this but is the smartest human being I know. And I don't mean the sort of useless crap we were taught in school. I mean emotional smart. I mean sitting next to a dying man and explaining to him that all is not lost. That he lived a great life and has much to be proud of. I mean squeezing his hand, kissing him on the cheek, and making his gift unsurpassed -that he will finally walk with Jesus to go see his wife again after a decade of sadness and loss. I mean that kind of intelligence, and my wife is unmatched.




And while my brain injury prevents me from doing most of the sort of things most people do, I have been given the unique understanding that comes with taking front row seats to those truly extraordinary experiences in people's lives. I see everything from the very beginning to the very end of this thing we call life.



Today we had lunch with a man in his 80's whose wife was convalescent in one room, an adopted daughter had been badly burned and predictably, suffered both emotional and cognitive handicaps lay in another, and yet we were served a fantastic homemade lunch with some of the freshest, most perfectly cooked, buttered bread in the southeast, all in a side-nook with a lakeside view.

My point is this: I may have a brain injury, I may be disabled to a degree that leaves me unable to work, and I may be more easily confused than a chameleon in a bag of skittles... But the fact is I am able to love and have married a multilayered Episcopal priest with a heart of pure gold.





Yes, I fight with my brain every single day, but simultaneously, I fight for this thing we call life, and like most all of us, I fight for what we call love. Perhaps I am confused right now -writing this very article, but after it is all said and done, I may not have accomplished any of my youthful life goals, but I am happy, and what more can you ask for than that?





3rd Person Recount:

At 34 years old, a nice man missed a red-light and everything about Murray Dunlap's life changed. More than a decade later, he lives every day with a severe Traumatic Brain Injury. At the time of his wreck, Murray was a married writer about to start a new career as an English teacher. His marriage could not survive the confusion and amnesia. When asked, he did not know he was married. After three months in a coma, a year in a wheelchair, learning to walk again, and more doctors and therapy than he can remember, he is living a successful life with a TBI and has married an Episcopal priest.

Murray is an artist, writer, photographer, and motivational speaker.

To learn more about Murray's book of poems visit his website at murraydunlap.com

- Proof (poems)
 - A Beautiful Catastrophe (poems)
 - Bastard Blue (stories)
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