

## **THROUGH GLASS DARKLY**

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Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN  
Sunday, 29 May 2011, pg. C-4  
'Writer's Corner'

Ellen and I were in college together, you know, and she and Bob used to dance. They could really jitterbug!

A family member and I were speaking of a mutual relative and this information about



Ellen, whom I thought of as always gracious but dignified and reserved, was a revelation.

We are all now in our 80s but I had a sudden picture of Ellen when she was young, small, red-haired and blue-eyed, her skirt whirling, her feet flying as she and Bob danced to the singing rhythms of Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and Harry James.

O remember dancing to "Juke Box Saturday Night," "Tuxedo Junction," "In the Mood," and other juke box favorites of the 1940s, but I never became really good at jitterbugging. When I told Ellen about our conversation, she said, "Yes, that's how we met – dancing – and then we started dating."

One of my favorite relative, I've only seen Ellen infrequently over the years since childhood, so my impressions of her are a hodgepodge of brief images. Even with our closest friends and relatives, this is often how we see each other. Doing interview stories over the years, trying to capture in a few hundred words, the essence of someone's personality, has always left me feeling how little we know of others.

Sir Thomas Browne, a 17<sup>th</sup> Century philosopher, wrote: "I am in the dark to all the world and my nearest friends behold me but in a cloud."

The Bible (1 Corinthians, 13:12, KJV) puts it this way: "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

When death claims a mate or a close friend or family member, this truth is driven home as we remember things we left unsaid or wish that we'd done. Sometimes we learn things about the person after death that we never knew while they were walking with us in life.

After my husband died, I found a small card in my wallet with the Serenity Prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr printed on one side and a note he'd addressed to "My Dear Wife Sarah," saying "maybe this should be a guide to us." I have no memory of his giving it to me but now I treasure it and carry it always – a little part of him I seem to have missed.

I am comforted by my faith that assures me that we will know each other more truly in Heaven than we did in this life. Then we'll know and be know wholly and not in part.

Maybe we should cast kinder glances at the bits and pieces we see of others now since none of us knows what the next second may bring.

\*Read more 'Writer's Corner at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>