

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST by profession, Loren Eiseley is considered by some to be one of America's greatest literary stylists. His writing seems to have truly been an inborn gift: when he wrote his first major paper in a university English class, his instructor was convinced that no university student could write so well and refused to give him a passing grade, believing he had plagiarized the work. Throughout his life, Eiseley went on to receive dozens of awards and over thirty-five honorary degrees in response to his writing. To my knowledge, Loren Eiseley never professed an explicit belief in God, yet his vision of nature was so penetrating and wondrous that his work has been considered among the best spiritual writing of the twentieth century. In the face of all this Loren remains unknown to most of us, and in writing referred to himself simply as "a quite common man."

IT IS fitting that although a web search for Loren Eiseley will yield over twelve thousand hits, the only site devoted exclusively to him does not appear to have been tended to in quite some time. I am inclined to think, at least, that he himself would have found this appropriate. It also gives me an excuse to do what I really must, and pay my own homage to him. I made him a promise once, and I want to keep it—even if I must do so imperfectly.

DURING MY senior year of high school and throughout the first few years of my undergraduate degree program, in the midst of adolescent angst and narcissism, I read every Eiseley work I could find. I read some of them so many times that the books fell apart. At some point, I promised the memory of Loren Eiseley that if I were ever published, I would dedicate my first book to him.

BUT I am older now. I have a spouse and I have children. I owe them everything, which includes any thought of book dedications. And so I am afraid, Loren, that this will have to do:

*Thank you, my friend, for the coasts of Costabel; they shaped my life. I too remember strawberry boxes when they were not green plastic, and as I have done so many times before, I weep tonight as I think of you. I will remember. I will remember you – and the lion with the shoebottom eyes.*

*May your bones always rest gently, cradled to rest in the Love you intuited so profoundly, and shared so brilliantly. In the continuing history of an unexpected universe, your light still shines in our inner galaxies.*