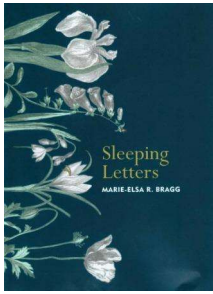


Loss, grief, love and peace



Sleeping Letters

By Marie-Elsa R Bragg

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This book is threefold: it is a letter to God, a letter to parents, and the choreography of performing the Eucharist, all written by a priest who is grieving the tragic loss of her mother. At the age of six, Bragg tragically lost her mother to suicide; the loss of a loved one at such a tender age, knowing that something has happened but not knowing fully the extent of the loss, left a deep wound that never seemed to heal. This grief has haunted Bragg throughout her life, and being a priest, sharing others' grief and not able to let go of her own, is expressed throughout the words in this book.

The detailed preparation of the Eucharist gave her a safe place to grieve, to rage and to find peace, while surrounded by the mystery of life in death. Page by page, the grief is palpable in the words, and in the immaculate precision of preparing for the Holy Eucharist, each written detail, the question of how does a priest reconcile one's own deep, hurting grief, in the knowledge of the one who gave His body and blood for us.

The unsent letters to Bragg's father recognise the hurt that he had to live with because his wife had taken her own life and the stigma of mental illness; how he had had to bring up his daughter on his own, with the help of grandparents, ensuring that his daughter was truly loved.

The unsent letters to her mother express how much she loved her, without having any real sense of knowing her.

The unsent letters to God encapsulate Bragg's current role as a priest, the coping mechanisms she has used to carry on, and the questioning of her own faith.

To understand what is happening in this book, and to fully appreciate its contents, it is necessary to read the preface, which explains the background and the threefold interweaving of the unsent letters.

Venerable Eileen Davies