

Sacred Places

What is it about these outcroppings in the sea that awakens the soul?

by Rev. Tony Burkhard

Hugh Dwelley on The Dance Floor at Baker Island, 1996



"I recall a committal one frigid winter morning for a friend who had lived on Little Cranberry Island. We took a lobsterboat from Islesford out to Baker's and off the Dancing Rocks offered Paul's ashes to the sea. In a laser-like second I felt the power of those scattered, flat, perfectly fashioned rocks jutting out of the sea smoke into the Atlantic on that frozen morning. It's the stuff of poetry, but more than poetry, even -- some ancient, primordial soul knowledge mostly buried in us, silent until those rare moments when despite ourselves it erupts.

"It was bitter cold that morning when we spread out Paul's ashes off the Dancing Rocks. Baker's Island is monolithic in the winter. To the eastward, it is the last island until the Washington County cluster looms through the seasmoke. Although close to Mt. Desert Island, it still keeps its distance and remains its own place. We were all silent as the island dropped astern in the wake of the lobsterboat. Anything other than quiet at that moment would have bordered on sacrilege."

These sentiments are excerpted from a piece by Rev. Tony Burkhard that appeared in the 1992 issue of the ISLAND JOURNAL published by the Island Institute, Rockland, Maine.

The committal was of the remains of Paul Fisher whose Islesford home looks out at Baker's Island.

Photo taken on the Dancing Rocks by Hugh Dwelley.