

Eulogy from a Physicist by Aaron Freeman (Adapted)

You want a physicist to speak at your funeral. You want the physicist to talk to your grieving family and friends about the conservation of energy—it is neither created nor destroyed—so they understand that your energy has not died. It—every vibration, every Btu of heat, every wave of every particle that was you—remains in this world.

And, hopefully, at some point the physicist will explain that all the hundreds of trillions of photons that bounced off your face and whose paths were interrupted by your smile, were gathered in the particle detectors that are your loved ones' eyes and turned into constellations of electromagnetically charged neurons—memories—that live on.

And the physicist will describe how much of *all* our energy is given off as heat and how the warmth that flowed through you in life is still here—still part of all that we are—even as we mourn and continue the heat of our own lives.

And you want the physicist to assure your loved ones they need not have faith. Scientists have measured precisely the conservation of energy and found it accurate, verifiable and consistent across space and time. According to this first law of thermodynamics, not a bit of you is gone.

You're just less orderly.

Amen.