

DEATH

Dying and Mortality

1. ESSENCE

- 844 For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.
Genesis (B.C. 1200?)
- 845 Even as a caterpillar, when coming to an end of a blade of
grass, reaches out to another blade of grass and draws
itself over to it, in the same way the Soul, leaving the
body and unwisdom behind, reaches out to another body and
draws itself over to it.
Upanishads (c. B.C. 800)
- 846 Then shalt dust return to the earth as it was:
and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.
Ecclesiastes (B.C. 300?)
- 847 That last day does not bring extinction to us,
but change of place.
Cicero (B.C. 106-43)
- 848 We begin to die as soon as we are born,
and the end is linked to the beginning.
Manilius (fl. 100 A.D.)
- 849 Death is the golden key that opens the palace of eternity.
Milton (1608-1674)
- 850 Death is the veil which those who live call life;
They sleep, and it is lifted.
Shelley (1792-1822)
- 851 Death is the dropping of the flower that the fruit may
swell.
Beecher (1813-1878)

2. OPPOSITES

- 852 The Father is the Giver of Life; but the Mother is the
Giver of Death, because her womb is the gate of ingress
to matter, and through her life is ensouled to form,
and no form can be either infinite or eternal.
Death is implicit in birth.
Kabbalah (B.C. 1200?-700? A.D.)

- 853 There are two ways of passing from this world -
one in light and one in darkness.
When one passes in light, he does not come back;
but when one passes in darkness, he returns.
Bhagavad Gita (c. B.C. 400)
- 854 Pale death, with impartial step, knocks at the hut of
the poor and the towers of kings.
Horace (B.C. 65-8)
- 855 It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little
infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other.
Bacon (1561-1626)
- 856 The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts and is desired.
Shakespeare (1564-1616)
- 857 And I still onward haste to my last night;
Time's fatal wings do ever forward fly;
So every day we live, a day we die.
Thomas Campion (1567-1620)
- 858 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.
John Donne (1572-1632)
- 859 Men fear death, as if unquestionably the greatest evil,
and yet no man knows that it may not be the greatest good.
William Mitford (1744-1827)
- 860 Is death the last step?
No, it is the final awakening.
Walter Scott (1771-1832)
- 861 For I say, this is death and the sole death,
When a man's loss comes to him from his gain,
Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,
And lack of love from love made manifest.
Robert Browning (1812-1889)
- 862 Living is death; dying is life.
We are not what we appear to be.
On this side of the grave we are exiles, on that citizens;
on this side orphans, on that children;
on this side captives, on that freemen...
Beecher (1813-1878)
- 863 Life is the jailer, death the angel sent to draw the
unwilling bolts and set us free.
James Lowell (1819-1891)

864 Life is a dream walking
Death is a going home.

Chinese Proverb

3. INSIGHT

865 Involvement in a form is the beginning of the death of life. It is a straightening and a limiting; a binding and a constricting. Form checks life, thwarts it, and yet enables it to organize. Seen from the point of view of free-moving force, incarceration in a form is extinction. Form disciplines force with a merciless severity.

Kabbalah (B.C. 1200?-700? A.D.)

866 Remember the men of old passed away,
those of days to come will also pass away:
a mortal ripens like corn and like corn is born again.

Upanishads (c. B.C. 800)

867 No evil is honorable: but death is honorable;
therefore death is not evil.

Zeno (B.C. 335?-264)

868 Few cross the river of time and are able to reach non-being.
Most of them run up and down only on this side of the river.
But those who when they know the law follow the path of the law, they shall reach the other shore and go beyond the realm of death.

The Dhammapada (c. B.C. 300)

869 The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living.

Cicero (B.C. 106-43)

870 Nobody dies prematurely who dies in misery.

Publilius Syrus (fl. B.C. 42)

871 Death is sometimes a punishment, sometimes a gift;
to many it has come as a favor.

Seneca (B.C. 3-65 A.D.)

872 Strange - is it not? - that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the road
Which to discover we must travel too.

Omar Khayyam (fl. 1100)

873 The fear of death is worse than death.

Robert Burton (1576-1640)

- 874 The birds of the air die to sustain thee; the beasts of the field die to nourish thee; the fishes of the sea die to feed thee. Our stomachs are their common sepulcher. Good God! with how many deaths are our poor lives patched up! how full of death is the life of momentary man!
Quarles (1592-1644)
- 875 Neither the sun nor death can be looked at with a steady eye
La Rochefoucauld (1613-1680)
- 876 It is impossible that anything so natural, so necessary, and so universal as death, should ever have been designed by Providence as an evil to mankind.
Swift (1667-1745)
- 877 Death, so called, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is passed in sleep.
Byron (1788-1824)
- 878 We sometimes congratulate ourselves at the moment of waking from a troubled dream; it may be so the moment after death.
Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)
- 879 We look at death through the cheap-glazed windows of the flesh, and believe him the monster which the flawed and cracked glass represents him.
James Lowell (1819-1891)
- 880 Man has the possibility of existence after death. But possibility is one thing and the realization of the possibility is quite a different thing.
Gurdjieff (1873-1949)
- 881 A man's dying is more the survivors' affair than his own.
Thomas Mann (1875-1955)

4. POSITIVE

- 882 This is thy present world, said the Flame to the Spark. Thou art myself, my image, and my shadow. I have clothed myself in thee, and thou art my vehicle to the day, "Be with us," when thou shalt re-become myself and others, thyself and me.
Book of Dzyan (B.C. 3000?)
- 883 Death may be the greatest of all human blessings.
Socrates (B.C. 469-399)
- 884 He whom the gods love dies young,
while he is in health,
has his senses and his judgments sound.
Plautus (B.C. 254-184)

- 885 Thou fool, what is sleep but the image of death?
Fate will give an eternal rest.
Ovid (B.C. 43-18 A.D.)
- 886 This day, which thou fearest as thy last,
is the birthday of eternity.
Seneca (B.C. 3-65 A.D.)
- 887 The gods conceal from men the happiness of death,
that they may endure life.
Lucan (39-65 A.D.)
- 888 Not by lamentations and mournful chants ought we to
celebrate the funeral of a good man, but by hymns,
for in ceasing to be numbered with mortals he enters
upon the heritage of a diviner life.
Plutarch (46-120 A.D.)
- 889 Death is a release from the impressions of the senses,
and from desires that make us their puppets,
and from the vagaries of the mind,
and from the hard service of the flesh.
Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.)
- 890 As a well-spent day brings happy sleep,
so a life well spent brings happy death.
Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519)
- 891 Death, they say, acquits us of all obligations.
Montaigne (1533-1592)
- 892 Death is the cure for all diseases.
Thomas Browne (1605-1682)
- 893 We should weep for men at their birth, not at their death.
Montesquieu (1689-1755)
- 894 I look upon death to be as necessary to our constitution as
sleep. We shall rise refreshed in the morning.
Franklin (1706-1790)
- 895 Death is a commingling of eternity with time; in the death
of a good man, eternity is seen looking through time.
Goethe (1749-1832)
- 896 That which is so universal as death must be a benefit.
Schiller (1759-1805)
- 897 The darkness of death is like the evening twilight;
it makes all objects appear more lovely to the dying.
Richter (1763-1825)

- 898 Death gives us sleep, eternal youth, and immortality.
Richter (1763-1825)
- 899 Death is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release,
the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure,
and the comforter of him whom time cannot console.
Colton (1780-1832)
- 900 How wonderful is death!
Death and his brother sleep.
Shelley (1792-1822)
- 901 But life is sweet, though all that makes it sweet
Lessen like sound of friends' departing feet;
And Death is beautiful as feet of friend
Coming with welcome at our journey's end.
James Lowell (1819-1891)
- 902 Nothing can happen more beautiful than death.
Walt Whitman (1819-1892)
- 903 There is no death! the stars go down
To rise upon some other shore,
And bright in Heaven's jeweled crown,
They shine for ever more.
John McCreery (1835-1906)
- 904 Death is delightful. Death is dawn,
The waking from a weary night
Of fevers unto truth and light.
Joaquin Miller (1839-1913)
- 905 The essential part of our being can only survive if the
transient part dissolves. Death is a condition of survival.
That which has been gained must be eternalized, and can only
be eternalized by being transmuted, by passing through death
into eternal life. This is the meaning of Resurrection.
Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan (born 1916)

5. NEGATIVE

- 906 The path of immortality is hard, and only a few find it.
The rest await the Great Day when the wheels of the universe
shall be stopped and the immortal sparks shall escape from
the sheaths of substance. Woe unto those who wait, for
they must return again, unconscious and unknowing, to the
seed-ground of stars, and await a new beginning.
The Divine Pymander (BC 2500?-200 AD?)

- 907 O how small a portion of earth will hold us when we
are dead, who ambitiously seek after the whole world
while we are living.
Philip II (B.C. 382-336)
- 908 Death alone discloses how insignificant
are the puny bodies of men.
Juvenal (40-125 A.D.)
- 909 It is not death, it is dying that alarms me.
Montaigne (1533-1592)
- 910 Ah, what a sign it is of evil life,
Where death's approach is seen so terrible!
Shakespeare (1564-1616)
- 911 If some men died and others did not,
death would indeed be a most mortifying evil.
La Bruyere (1645-1696)
- 912 The Fear of Death often proves Mortal, and sets People on
Methods to save their Lives, which infallibly destroy them.
Addison (1672-1719)
- 913 A dying man can do nothing easy.
Franklin (1706-1790)
- 914 To neglect, at any time, preparation for death, is to sleep
on our post at a siege; to omit it in old age, is to sleep
at an attack.
Johnson (1709-1784)
- 915 Death is the tyrant of the imagination. His reign is in
solitude and darkness, in tombs and prisons, over weak
hearts and seething brains. He lives, without shape or
sound, a phantasm, inaccessible to sight or touch, - a
ghastly and terrible apprehension.
Barry Cornwall (1787-1874)
- 916 Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly longed for death.
Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)
- 917 There is no such thing as death.
In nature nothing dies.
From each sad remnant of decay
Some forms of life arise.
Charles Mackay (1814-1889)

6. ADVICE

- 918 Labour not after riches first, and think thou afterwards
wilt enjoy them. He who neglecteth the present moment,
throweth away all that he hath. As the arrow passeth
through the heart, while the warrior knew not that it was
coming; so shall his life be taken away before he knoweth
that he hath it.
Akhenaton? (c. B.C. 1375)
- 919 Trust not your own powers till the day of your death.
The Talmud (B.C. 500?-400? A.D.)
- 920 But learn that to die is a debt we must all pay.
Euripides (B.C. 480-406)
- 921 Death is as sure for that which is born,
as birth is for that which is dead.
Therefore grieve not for what is inevitable.
Bhagavad Gita (c. B.C. 400)
- 922 He who knows that this body is like froth,
and has learnt that it is as unsubstantial as a mirage,
will break the flower-pointed arrow of illusion,
and never see the king of death.
The Dhammapada (c. B.C. 300)
- 923 It is uncertain in what place death may await thee;
therefore expect it in any place.
Seneca (B.C. 3-65 A.D.)
- 924 Let death be daily before your eyes, and you will never
entertain any abject thought, nor too eagerly covet
anything.
Epictetus (50-138 A.D.)
- 925 Despise not death, but welcome it,
for Nature wills it like all else.
Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.)
- 926 At the moment of death there will appear to you, swifter
than lightning, the luminous splendour of the colourless
light of Emptiness, and that will surround you on all sides.
Terrified, you will flee from the radiance... Try to submerge
yourself in that light, giving up all belief in a separate
self, all attachment to your illusory ego. Recognize that
the boundless Light of this true Reality is your own true
self, and you shall be saved!
Tibetan Book of the Dead (c. 780 A.D.)

- 927 Do not be frightened or bewildered by the luminous,
brilliant, very sharp and clear light of supreme wisdom...
Be drawn to it...take refuge in it...Do not take pleasure in
the soft light...Do not be attracted to it or yearn for it.
It is an obstacle blocking the path of liberation.
Tibetan Book of the Dead (c. 780 A.D.)
- 928 If you don't know how to die, don't worry;
Nature will tell you what to do on the spot, fully and
adequately. She will do this job perfectly for you;
don't bother your head about it.
Montaigne (1533-1592)
- 929 Let no man fear to die, we love to sleep all,
And death is but the sounder sleep.
Francis Beaumont (1584-1616)
- 930 If life must not be taken too seriously -
then so neither must death.
Samuel Butler (1612-1680)

7. POTPOURRI

- 931 Life that breathes now lies still and yet moves fast, rush-
ing but firmly fixed in the midst of the resting places.
The life of the dead one wanders as his nature wills.
The immortal comes from the same womb as the mortal.
Rig Veda (B.C. 1200-900?)
- 932 Your lost friends are not dead, but gone before,
Advanced a stage or two upon that road
Which you must travel in the steps they trod.
Aristophanes (B.C. 448-380)
- 933 Before long, alas! this body will lie on the earth,
despised, without understanding, like a useless log.
The Dhammapada (c. B.C. 300)
- 934 I have lived, and I have run the course
which fortune allotted me;
and now my shade shall descend illustrious to the grave.
Vergil (B.C. 70-19)
- 935 Property is unstable, and youth perishes in a moment.
Life itself is held in the grinning fangs of Death,
Yet men delay to obtain release from the world.
Alas, the conduct of mankind is surprising.
Nagarjuna (c. 100-200 A.D.)

- 936 Oh you who have been removed from God in his solitude
by the abyss of time, how can you expect to reach him
without dying?
al-Hallaj (c. 858-922 A.D.)
- 937 I died a mineral, and became a plant.
I died a plant and rose an animal.
I died an animal and I was man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Jalal-Uddin Rumi (1207-1273)
- 938 Now I am about to take my last voyage,
a great leap in the dark.
Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)
- 939 This man is freed from servile bands,
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And leaving nothing, yet hath all.
Robert Herrick (1591-1674)
- 940 He was exhaled; his great Creator drew
His spirit, as the sun the morning dew.
Dryden (1631-1700)
- 941 The prince who kept the world in awe,
The judge whose dictate fix'd the law;
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,
Are levelled; death confounds 'em all.
Gay (1688-1732)
- 942 As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
Receives the lurking principle of death,
The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.
Pope (1688-1744)
- 943 Would you extend your narrow span,
And make the most of life you can;
Would you, when medicines cannot save,
Descend with ease into the grave;
Calmly retire, like evening light,
And cheerful bid the world good night?
Voltaire (1694-1778)
- 944 Then with no fiery throbbing pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way.
Johnson (1709-1784)

- 945 All flesh is grass, and all its glory fades
Like the fair flower dishevelled in the wind;
Riches have wings, and grandeur is a dream;
The man we celebrate must find a tomb,
And we that worship him, ignoble graves.
Cowper (1731-1800)
- 946 Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever!
Walter Scott (1771-1832)
- 947 First our pleasures die - and then
Our hopes, and then our fears - and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust - and we die too.
Shelley (1792-1822)
- 948 The sweet calm sunshine of October, now
Warms the low spot; upon its grassy mould
The purple oak-leaf falls; the birchen bough
Drops its bright spoil like arrow-heads of gold.
William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)
- 949 To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late,
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers
And the temples of his gods?
Macaulay (1800-1859)
- 950 When a great man dies,
for years the light he leaves behind him,
lies on the paths of men.
Longfellow (1807-1882)
- 951 Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.
Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)
- 952 Dying is a wild night and a new road.
Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

953 And I hear from the outgoing ship in the bay
The song of the sailors in glee:
So I think of the luminous footprints that bore
The comfort o'er dark Galilee,
And wait for the signal to go to the shore,
To the ship that is waiting for me.

Bret Harte (1836-1902)

954 Out of the chill and the shadow,
Into the thrill and the shine;
Out of the dearth and the famine,
Into the fullness divine.

Margaret Sangster (1838-1912)