

CELEBRATING LIVING & DYING:

A Few Thoughts about Transience

To cradle a single day and see within it the span of an entire lifetime: there is an exquisite beauty in this.

Most civilizations paint a cosmetic mask over death, treating it as though it were hermetically sealed away from vibrant life. As a result, few of us feel the quiet cadence of how we are dying each day. One of the most important Buddhist meditations invites us to sit closely with our mortality, not to despair, but to make the fleeting gift of existence burn all the more brightly. A human birth is a remarkable gift.

The most important lessons in life come when confronting our limitations. That is when spiritual transformation takes place. Only when the brittle shell of the ego cracks, revealing a cosmos that does not orbit around our solitary selves.

Some cannot bear the weight of this shattering, fleeing into the fog of illusion or stepping into the dark prematurely. Many who have glimpsed moments beyond the veil seek escape into fantasies or even suicide. Yet, whether we recognize it or not, the threshold of discovery is always present. So enjoy life with grace, meet it with humor, and do not fear the fractures or the sudden jolts: those very fissures hold the seeds of awakening.

Fossils are our most patient teachers, each one a stone-bound capsule from a vanished epoch. Species lost to the deep currents of time remain preserved in adamant rock-cages, suspended in quiet dignity. Our own towering civilization will, in some distant twilight, dissolve into scattered fossils. What sort of future creatures will someday examine our debris, wondering who we were?

At their core, modern funerals are a vanity of copper and coin, and standard burial practices are an ecological wound inflicted on the earth. Fertile ground should belong to the living, not the dead. I dream of a world where cemeteries are transformed into breathing, productive fields, for all life is bound to a Great Recycling. To keep corpses in elaborate coffins or reserve plots of ground solely for burial space does not make sense on a crowded planet. If the dead require a monument, let their ashes be sown as the seeds of a new forest. Perhaps it is time to construct virtual cemeteries with cyber tombstones. On a crowded planet, people should consider using digital cemeteries. Let our memorials be woven from bytes and starlight in digital sanctuaries, leaving the physical earth to heal.

If possible, before going to sleep each night, gaze at the stars: it is a good way to remember our insignificance. People who gaze at the stars regularly seldom worry about trivial things, and their eyes often develop a curious clarity.

We are all time travelers, drifting through currents where the past, present, and unwritten futures bleed into one another. Visionaries have always known how to navigate these tides, casting and reading messages across the years. You can experiment and send messages through time. At certain stages in life, it is useful to receive "a message from a bottle." Bottles can be in the form of thoughts, words, or actions. We must remember that not all bottles float across oceans of water; many drift silently through the Great Sea of Time.

A dear friend once shared these words with me:

Every day I live, I die a little.
When I remember I die a little,
Every day, I live a bit better.

Her words are with me to this day.

NOTE: This piece was partially generated with AI tools for styling and ideation; human editing was then applied.

- T Newfields

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