

The God Tezcatlipoca, he was considered a true god, invisible, able to enter everywhere, in the heavens, on earth and into the place of the dead. It was said that when he was upon earth he incited people to war, created enmity and discord and caused much anguish and disquiet. He set people against one another so that they made wars, and for this reason he was called 'the enemy on both sides'.

He alone understood how the world was governed, and alone gave prosperity and riches, and took them away at will; he gave riches, prosperity and fame, courage and command, dignities and honour, and took them away again as he willed. For this he was feared and revered, for it was within his power to raise up or to cast down.

*After great pain, a formal feeling comes—
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs—
The stiff Heart questions was it He, that bore,
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?*

*The Feet, mechanical, go round—
Of Ground, or Air, or Ought—*

A Wooden way

Regardless grown,

A Quartz contentment, like a stone—

This is the Hour of Lead—

Remembered, if outlived,

As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow—

First—Chill—then Stupor—then the letting go—

EMILY DICKINSON

That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts;
even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth
the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man
hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to
dust again.

Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward,
and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the
earth?

ECCLESIASTES

Death is nature's way of telling us to slow down.

AMERICAN INSURANCE PROVERBS

*There was a man of double deed
Sowed his garden full of seed.
When the seed began to grow
'Twas like a garden full of snow.
When the snow began to melt
'Twas like a ship without a belt.
When the ship began to sail
'Twas like a bird without a tail.
When the bird began to fly
'Twas like an eagle in the sky.
When the sky began to roar
'Twas like a lion at the door.
When the door began to crack
'Twas like a stick across my back.
When my back began to smart
'Twas like a penknife in my heart.
When my heart began to bleed
'Twas death and death and death indeed.*

Listen to the newborn infant's cry in the hour of birth—see the death struggles in the final hour—and then declare whether what begins and ends in this way can be intended to be enjoyment.

True enough, we human beings do everything as fast as possible to get away from these two points, hurry as fast as possible to forget the birth-cry and change it to delight in having given a being life. And when someone dies we immediately say: Softly and gently he slipped away, death is a sleep, a quiet sleep—something we do not say for the sake of the one who died, for our talking cannot help him, but for our own sake, in order not to lose any of the zest for life, in order to change everything to serve an increase in the zest for life during the interval between the birth-cry and the death-wail, between the mother's shriek and the child's repetition of it, when the child at some time dies.

Imagine somewhere a great and splendid hall where everything is done to produce joy and merriment—but the entrance to this room is a nasty, muddy, horrible stairway and it is impossible to pass without getting disgustingly soiled, and admission is paid by prostituting oneself, and when day dawns the merriment is over and all ends with one's being kicked out again—but the whole night through everything is done to keep up and inflame the merriment and pleasure!

What is reflection? Simply to reflect on these two questions: How did I get into this and this and how do I get out of it again, how does it end? What is thoughtlessness? To muster everything in order to drown all this about entrance and exit in forgetfulness, to muster everything to re-explain and explain away entrance and exit, simply lost in the interval between the birth-cry and the repetition of this cry when the one who is born expires in the death struggle.

Tis the yeares midnight, and it is the dayes,

Lacér, who scarce scaven houres herself unmaskes,

The Sunne is spent, and now his flasks

Send forth light squibs, no constant rayes;

The worlds whole sap is sunke;

The generall balme th'hydropicque earth hath drunk,

Whither, as to the beds-feet, life is shrunk,

Dead and enterr'd; yet all these seeme to laugh,

Compar'd with mee, who am their Epitaph.

Study me then, you who shall lovers bee

At the next world, that is, at the next Spring:

For I am every dead thing,

In whom love wrought new Alchimie.

For his art did expresse

A quinteence even from nothingnesse,

From dull privations, and leaze emptinesse:

He ruin'd mee, and I am re-begot

Of absence, darkness, death; things which are not.

All others, from all things, draw all that's good,

Life, soule, forme, spirit, whence they being have;

I, by loves limbecke, am the grave

Of all, that's nothing. Oft a flood

Have wee two wept, and so

Drownd the whole world, us two; oft did we grow

To be two Chaoses, when we did show

Care to ought else; and often absences

Withdrew our soules, and made us carcases.

But I am by her death, (which word wrongs her)

Of the first nothing, the Elixer grown;

Were I am a man, that I were one,

I needs must know; I should preferre,

If I were any beast,

Some ends, some means; Yea plants, yea stones detest,

And love; All, all some properties invest;

If I an ordinary nothing were,

As shadow, a light, and body must be here.

But I am None; nor will my Sunne renew.

You lovers, for whose sake, the lesser Sunne

Every man is the greatest enemy unto himself.... We study many times to undo ourselves, abusing those good things which God hath bestowed upon us, health, wealth, strength, wit, learning, art, memory, to our own destruction... we arm ourselves to our own overthrow, and use reason, art, judgement, all that should help us, as so many instruments to undo us.

ROBERT BURTON

Everywhere there were people living out their lives using aspects of suicide against themselves. They did not even have the authenticity of the final act to speak for them. Suicide is, in short, the one continuous, every-day, ever-present problem of living. It is a question of degree. I'd seen them in all varying stages of development and despair. The failed lawyer, the cynical doctor, the depressed housewife, the angry teen-ager... all of mankind engaged in the massive conspiracy against their own lives that is their daily activity. The meaning of suicide, the true meaning, had yet to be defined, had yet to be created in the broad dimensions it deserved.

DANIEL STERN