

Excerpts from

Death ... *

*** ... is just God's way of letting you know She didn't find you all that amusing**

Chapter VII Death Benefits: The Up-Side of Passing Away

- " Soles and heels don't wear out as quickly
- " Noticeably slowed pulse
- " Nervous tic gone
- " Hay fever cleared up spontaneously
- " Sex life seems improved
- " Chance of freak electrocution by lightning diminished
- " Still able to vote in Chicago
- " Can scratch "Get Lozenges" off your to-do list
- " Haagen-Dazs no longer fattening
- " "Hot enough for ya?" asked less and less
- " Tooth decay controlled without fluoride
- " Able to do the luge
- " Able to be the luge
- " Sleeve and cuff wear and tear cut by at least 75 percent
- " Chance of accidentally wandering into a Gilbert Gottfried performance less likely
- " Madonna still sexually interested in you
- " Still have as much chance as anyone of seeing the Cubs win the World Series
- " Whatever you have, it's a lifetime supply

Chapter XVII Weed It and Reap

Death has many faces, yet each one of those faces has that little indented thing between your nose and your upper lip you can never remember the name of. Every society, every culture depicts Death in its own way. And that is why we are always at war with somebody.

The way that we picture the figure of Death in this culture is as a bony, unnaturally white figure dressed in black with a dark, dangling covering atop the head and a phantom come-hither finger pointing in our direction, accompanied by an odd, unearthly voice. Of course, this also described Michael Jackson. Who said this society wasn't confusing?

In Port-au-Queen, the Bahamas, Death is said to appear disguised as Garrison Keillor, who then lures the ill and injured with dobro music and biscuits into a Hell in which each successive level is a radio show that sounds exactly like the one before, and you are forced to pretend to enjoy news about Lutherans in Lake Wobegon for eternity.

To the moron shepherds of the Alpine village of Ong, Death hops in on little frogs' legs, with the head of a primordial, oozing fromage and yodeling *La Marseillaise* backwards.

The paleolithic cave paintings of Truquil depict hordes of either laughing or screaming (or perhaps whistling) stick figures running from Death, which appears to be either a Russet potato or a wheelbarrow equipped with a satellite dish. It is difficult to determine which, or either, ever since the University of Southern Truquil A&M's restoration project of 1987, during which many of the cave paintings were replaced with cave wallpaper and panelling and cave acoustical drop stalactites.

The tooth and surrounding gingiva are a recurrent image of Death in many widely separated small villages that have very little else to think about most of the time. Best documented among these are the feared Molar of Death in parts of Mozambique, the Inflamed Gum and Plaque of Kuala Lumpur, and the Buck Teeth from Hades in Reykjavik. Several Cambodian villages attempt to ward off Death by wearing nightcaps knitted with dental floss, but they just end up as dead people with waxed string on their head.

Large caterpillars, being coerced to watch Neil Diamond in concert, a green phosphorescent ThighMaster, John McCain first thing in the morning — these are some of the other ways Death comes to the more primitive of Earth's people. Who is to say they are wrong, or their vision is any less valid than ours? We are. They're wrong. So much for that line of inquiry.