1987

Tip Time, Funeral Fire

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"I Wouldn't be caught dead in a funeral parlor!"

Cover Page Footnote

This prose is available in The Angle: http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1987/iss1/28
Tip Time

Funeral Fire

(Or should the title be "Funeral under Fire?")

I wouldn't be caught dead in a funeral parlor!

Because all formal social events look the same, upon your arrival at a reception, ask out loud, so that everyone can hear, "IS SOMEONE GETTING MARRIED ... OR BURIED?" (In the case of a wedding, the answer is "all of the above.")

When it comes to funeral attire, I prefer the traditional:

Women should wear
Black dress, black shoes,
Black stockings and beads,
Black gloves, black hat,
Black bra, black skirt,
Black veil with solid cloth.
Black mink, black scarf,
Black vest, black shirt,
Black jewelry ankle chain.

Men in mourning wear
Black gloves, black belt*,
Black pants, black shirt,
Dark glasses or mask.
Black tie, black briefs,
Black socks, black shoes,
Black hat with black hat band.

Attend funerals at 11 A.M. It's a good way to keep your weight down: you won't want to eat anything afterwards, even though it will be lunchtime.

*Blackbelt. This also refers to a karate expert. Make sure you take one to the funeral; some of your relatives may get out-of-hand. (With a pun on the word "hand.")
At the funeral parlor: if the dead body moves, then slap it one.

Be sure to serve cake at the funeral reception. I suggest angel- or devil’s- food, depending on the character of the candidate and where he or she has applied for admission.

Funeral dirge: “Ding-dong, the witch is dead.”

When your spouse dies, try this tip (actually a condemnation) from Shakespeare: in Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 2, Hamlet says, “Thrift, thrift, Horatio! the funeral bak’d meats / Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.” Hamlet is suggesting that the marriage (actually, remarriage, of his recently widowed mother) took place so soon after the funeral in order to save money on refreshments.

Trying to have a conversation with the deceased is like trying to talk with children: your words fall on dead ears.

I strongly urge you to prepare a will. The best part of it is that YOU decide who gets your stuff and what they get. If you have some nerdish relatives who have treated you with nasty malevolence, this way you can make sure they’ll get NOTHING! (Unless, of course, you want to leave them your compost pile.)

Robert Kern

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DREAM OF A DYING DOG

I wear no leash in the humidity
Haven’t seen the dog catcher in weeks
And am tired for the rest of the day
Roaming this house sweltering
Tongue dangling for a cool drink of water
Trying to remember the images that fill
Each wasted morning, like a lost melody
An intonation of darkness

Too many dreams between each slumber
The days are longer, but mine are numbered
I’m 13, that’s 91 in dog years
Every waning hour seems like a lifetime
An endless boredom in the narrowing air
The rattle of lawnmowers
The howl of a freight train in the distance
Become audible prayers for the monotony
Of my dying life

Sleeping again, shivering in the heat
Of my mountain ancestors
Howling under the moon, bathed in cold sweat
Closed eyelids bulging
Searching for solitude in memories
Like a long-distance runner
With lubbery legs and pulsating chest
And a jaded heart pounding
Prostrated under the beating noon sun
Keep beating till that light goes out
Till collapse, debacle
With no appetite, foaming, dying
An epileptic seizure overcomes me
On this sweet afternoon
The last horrible convulsion
Before the Vet’s perfection puts me to sleep
This time, without dreams

Don Blair