

A PRAYER FOR DEATH

If I die in battle, let it be a moment or two after the Enemy has gone
Defeated and we realise incredulously that we have won, it is over, it is done
And the last rays of the setting sun light up our moment of victory
Then darkness covers all the bloody battle's ruin

Or if I die as a tired old man, beard pure white, eyes still bright
I can now relax and rest in peace, knowing all is well, all has been done
Life's work complete, the race was well run and now
We all get prizes – everyone – and I can now go on

Let all my wealth not be in silver coin, locked deep away, in iron vaults
Or lost like some legendary jewel or dragon's hoard of old
But let it be in wonderful bounty, groaning shelves, bright fruit jars full,
Bales of golden corn that nurture all through winter's cold

Let me die with many of my friends around me
Let them build a pyre of fragrant cedar wood and sandalwood
And dance wildly round the flames
As I ascend wreathed in scented smoke

Let all their gratitude and acclamations follow my life's path
To be written down in the akashic record book
Telling of what I did ... or did not do well
Whilst I must also look very hard at what I did not

Let my doings and my deeds be sung in many halls
By skilled harpers, with much food and good wine for all
And let those present remember well, and laugh and cry and sing and tell
For I did much and I deserve such praise

Let me die at the full of the moon
So that I can go brightly shining
Into the valley of the shadows
Lighting the first stage of my onward journey

Or let me die at Samhain when the old leaves turn red-gold
With the bonfire light of this glorious autumn
Where the death of the horned summer king is the gift
That ensures another year's full bounty

Let the bringer of death come upon me quickly
No long drawn-out longing for release
But a chance to look straight into his face
And to agree, "Yes!" and "Now!" and "Let's Go!"

If I die as pilgrim in some strange land, or foreign field, across
Tracts of dry wilderness or high ranged mountain
Let a whisper of my passing, born on an evening air
Bring a touch of a knowing smile and a gentle prayer

Let there also be, just the possibility
That my life-long love, my Beshert, my heart's destiny
Cannot bear the vacuum of my going and
Willingly disincorporates to be with me

Let my family of origin be waiting there
Caring and compassionate now, different from before
So I can taste the beauty that could have been
 And now know how it might have been

Let all my loved ones left behind know full well
That we all will meet again in that bright garden
After their passage through the vortex dark
 And I will be there waiting - with joy around

Let them also know that, in my heart, my soul
I do not fear this little parting for the dance that we dance
Is much longer and much more complex
 Than the few short simple steps that we have just made together

Let all my dear friends know – full well in truth
That – even when I could not show my love, my need, my sharing
Their warm love soothed me well, throughout the lonely cold
 So now I pray that they felt something of the same

Let my enemies be there, at my death, waiting for me
With bated breath, and let us try to find now the resolution
That we could not find on earth, in this life,
 As there was too little wisdom – too little love – and not enough of time

Let the winged messenger with his spear of truth
Touch my failing heart and let the golden brightness spread
Throughout my veins, changing my mortal body into auric radiance
 So that far-off travellers see a star and wonder what it might portend

My Angel knows full well that I have tried to match Her desires for me
Well - some of the time I tried and other times I cried, or was too scared
For the few real contacts that we had were so good
 That their absence in between was often much too painful

When I arrive, let heaven's nectar and ambrosia be spread
Flavoured with the tastes of chocolate and bailey's irish cream
Lamb tikka, french roast coffee and andante's bread
 For there are some things here on earth that we do quite well

Let my feathered pure-white wings have a particular soft harsh whisper
So that when I visit you – as I will often – in the dark of night
You will hear – you *will* know – you will feel the vespers of desire
 That I am still there, loving you

And even if there is nothing – even if that 'This is It', or 'Is That It?'
Let my soul, which is so more than 'this'
Experience now the fearful void as ultimate bliss
 Where there is nothing to do, just to be – at peace.