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Death Sleeps at the Foot of my Bed

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DEATH SLEEPS AT THE FOOT OF MY BED

AVENLEA GAMBLE

Death sleeps at the foot of my bed.
It is usually quiet, and doesn't take
up much space.
But sometimes Death is talkative,
and we chat, two old friends.
We discuss how our days have
passed in the other's absence,
As Death makes thousands more
absent in those solemn moments.
And sometimes I bear witness to
Death's morose profession.
It is not cruel, but it does not know
how to comfort when I mourn.

Death complains of an aching spine
when it rests in my presence,
And I think of Atlas, cursed to hold
up the world on his shoulders.
In bitterness I ask my dear friend if
it is similarly cursed to hold
up the world.

For I would think that it would
lighten its burden daily,
By spiriting away all the bad
luck children,
The comatose romantics,
The hopeful, hopeless, and those
lost amidst.
The flesh of the world is a
despairing husk, and you lighten
that burden, layer by layer
By taking my friends and my family,
those I love and those I never got
to meet
How can we curse you then, my
friend, if you lighten your curse?
Death dismisses its persecution
Alas, life is more infectious
than death
Nearly twice as many first breaths
are taken to replace the
final exhalations

ROSIE

JANA BURKARD

It is all Death can do to not be
buried with its victims in the face of
so many births.
I apologize.

Sometimes at night, when insomnia
enfolds the both of us,
We gaze out the window above my
bed, lingering on the lights dotting
the dark above
Stars die too. Do you claim them
as well?
Stars don't argue with their fate so
much when I pay a visit.
What fuels their apathy?
Even when stars die, their light
prevails for thousands of
years more.
Their light is their trace of memory.
Do humans have a trace
of memory?
Humans are social, and when
one expires, others grieve and
remember.
Stars are not social, so their
memory is allowed to shine for a
while longer.

We come to a quiet consensus
that night,
Gazing at the stars, all of whom
look alive but many are already
long since deceased.
We agree that while death is
mournful, it is not a finale,
For as long as a memory lives on,
Whether as a light in the sky or a
mind's memoir, our story has
not ended.
And eventually when that light
is extinguished,
Or the memory succumbs to tragic
forgetfulness, it will be okay.
Everyone has their fame, and
everyone has their curtain call.
Living forever is a rather dull thing.
Death would know. It tells it to me
in lullabies as I fall asleep.
And I let Death live with me,
another time into the waning dark.
Death sleeps at the foot of my bed.
Good night, my friend.