

Written by a widow on her adulterous husband's gravestone in an Atlanta, Ga., cemetery

Gone, but not forgiven

In a Silver City, Nev., cemetery

Here lays Butch,
We planted him raw.
He was quick on the trigger
But slow on the draw.

An old maid's epitaph in a Scranton, Pa., cemetery

No hits, no runs, no heirs.

A widow wrote this epitaph in a Vermont cemetery

Sacred to the memory of
my husband John Barnes
who died January 3, 1803

His comely young widow, aged 23, has
many qualifications of a good wife, and
years to be comforted.

Arthur C. Homans's epitaph in a Cleveland, O., cemetery

Once I wasn't
Then I was
Now I ain't again.

A lawyer's epitaph in England

Sir John Strange
Here lies an honest lawyer,
And that is Strange.

In a Georgia cemetery

"I told you I was sick!"

John Penny's epitaph in the Wimborne, Eng. land, cemetery

Reader if cash thou art
In want of any
Dig 4 feet deep
And thou wilt find a Penny

In the East Dalhousie Cemetery, Nova Scotia

Here lies
Ezekial Aikle
Age 102
The Good
Die Young

In a Waynesville, N.C., cemetery

Effie Jean Robinson
1897-1922

Come blooming youths, as you pass by
And on these lines do cast an eye
As you are now, so once was I;
As I am now, so must you be;
Prepare for death and follow me.

To which someone, who saw this, added

To follow you
I am not content
How do I know
Which way you went

—The Eds.

FOR FURTHER READING: *Over Their Dead Bodies* by Thomas C. Mann and Janet Greene. Brattleboro, Vt., Stephen Greene Press, 1962. *Grave Humor* by Alonzo C. Hall. Charlotte, N.C., McNally of Charlotte, 1961.

Death: Do-It-Yourself

Some Well-Known Suicides

"Many die too late, and some die too early. The maxim: die at the right time still sounds foreign to us."—Friedrich Nietzsche

An average of 70 people a day, nearly 26,000 a year, kill themselves in the U.S. Worldwide, the number of known suicides reaches about 1,000 per day. The number of attempted suicides is 10 times greater than the number of those that succeed.

Every era, every society, has been troubled and perplexed by man's deliberate decision to end his life. Suicide knows no boundaries. It

cuts across the spectrum of human life without regard for age, sex, race, nationality, or status.

Following are capsule accounts of some prominent—and some less prominent—men and women who have chosen suicide as the only alternative to their "dilemma of living."

WOLFE TONE (1763-1798)

Life: Irish revolutionist Wolfe Tone was the founder of the United Irishmen, a political group whose purpose was to reform the Irish Parliament—then a stronghold of Protestantism.

IRVING, WASHINGTON (1783-1859), American author

"Well, I must arrange my pillows for another weary night! When will this end?"

JACKSON, THOMAS "STONEWALL" (1824-1863), American Confederate general

"Let us go over the river, and sit in the shade of the trees."

KIDD, CAPTAIN WILLIAM (1645?-1701), Scottish pirate

Before being hanged: "This is a very fickle and faithless generation."

LAFAYETTE, MARQUIS DE (1757-1834), French soldier and statesman

"What do you expect? Life is like the flame of a lamp; when there is no more oil—zest! It goes out, and it is all over."

LOUIS XIV (1638-1715), French King

To his servants: "Why do you weep? Did you think I was immortal?"

MARIE ANTOINETTE (1755-1793), French Queen

To the executioner, after she stepped on his foot: "Monsieur, I beg your pardon."

MATHER, COTTON (1663-1728), American clergyman

"Is this dying? Is this all? Is this what I feared when I prayed against a hard death? Oh, I can bear this! I can bear it!"

MORE, SIR THOMAS (1478-1535), English statesman

To the executioner: "Pluck up thy spirits, man, and be not afraid to do thine office: My neck is very short; take heed, therefore, thou strike not awry, for saving of thine honesty."

NELSON, LORD HORATIO (1758-1805), English naval commander

"Thank God I have done my duty."

POE, EDGAR ALLAN (1809-1849), American writer

"Lord help my poor soul."

ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN DELANO (1882-1945), American President

"I have a terrific headache."

ROOSEVELT, THEODORE (1858-1919), American President

"Please put out the lights."

ROUSSEAU, JEAN JACQUES (1712-1778), French philosopher

"I go to see the sun for the last time."

SHAW, GEORGE BERNARD (1856-1950), English playwright

To his nurse: "Sister, you're trying to keep me alive as an old curiosity, but I'm done, I'm finished, I'm going to die."

SOCRATES (470?-399 B.C.), Greek philosopher

"Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius; will you remember to pay the debt?"

THOREAU, HENRY DAVID (1817-1862), American writer

"Moose. Indian."

WASHINGTON, GEORGE (1732-1799), American President

"Doctor, I die hard, but I am not afraid to go."

ZIEGFELD, FLORENZ (1867-1932), American theatrical producer

In a delirium: "Curtain! Fast music! Lights! Ready for the last finale! Great! The show looks good. The show looks good."

—C.O.

Rest in Peace

A Collection of Bizarre Gravestone Epitaphs

In an Edinburgh, Scotland, cemetery

Beneath this stone a lump of clay
Lies Uncle Peter Dan'els
Who early in the month of May
Took off his winter flannels

Thomas Stagg's epitaph in St. Giles Church yard, London

That is all

SATURDAY NIGHT

Play it once.
 O, play it some more.
 Charlie is a gambler
 An' Sadie is a whore
 A glass o' whiskey
 An' a glass o' gin:
 Strut, Mr. Charlie,
 Till de dawn comes in.
 Pawn yo' gold watch
 An' diamond ring.
 Git a quart o' licker.
 Let's shake dat thing!
 Skee-de-dad! De-dad!
 Doo-doo-doo!
 Won't be nothin' left
 When de worms git through.
 An' you's a long time
 Dead
 When you is
 Dead, too.
 So beat dat drum, boy!
 Shout dat song:
 Shake 'em up an' shake 'em up
 All night long.
 Hey! Hey!
 Ho . . . Hum!
 Do it, Mr. Charlie,
 Till de red dawn come.

JAZZ BAND IN A PARISIAN
 CABARET

Play that thing,
 Jazz band!
 Play it for the lords and ladies,
 For the dukes and counts,
 For the whores and gigolos,
 For the American millionaires,
 And the schoolteachers
 Out for a spree.
 Play it,
 Jazz band!
 You know that tune
 That laughs and cries at the same time.
 You know it.
 May I?
 Mais oui.
 Mein Gott!
 Parece una rumba.

Play it, jazz band!
 You've got seven languages to speak in
 And then some,
 Even if you do come from Georgia.
 Can I go home wid yuh, sweetie?
 Sure.

DRUM

Bear in mind
 That death is a drum
 Beating for ever
 Till the last worms come
 To answer its call,
 Till the last stars fall,
 Until the last atom
 Is no atom at all,
 Until time is lost
 And there is no air
 And space itself
 Is nothing nowhere.
 Death is a drum,
 A signal drum,
 Calling all life
 To Come! Come!
 Come!

FLORIDA ROAD WORKERS

I'm makin' a road
 For the cars
 To fly by on.
 Makin' a road
 Through the palmetto thicket
 For light and civilization
 To travel on.

 Makin' a road
 For the rich old white men
 To sweep over in their big cars
 And leave me standin' here.

 Sure,
 A road helps all of us!
 White folks ride—
 And I get to see 'em ride.
 I ain't never seen nobody
 Ride so fine before.
 Hey buddy!
 Look at me.
 I'm making a road!

AWAY!

Robert
Frost

Now I out walking
The world desert,
And my shoe and my stocking
Do me no hurt.

I leave behind
Good friends in town,
Let them get well-wined
And go lie down.

Don't think I leave
For the outer dark
Like Adam and Eve
Put out of the Park.

Forget the myth.
There is no one I
Am put out with
Or put out by.

Unless I'm wrong
I but obey
The urge of a song:
I'm—bound—away!

And I may return
If dissatisfied
With what I learn
From having died.

I'VE SEEN A DYING EYE

I've seen a dying eye
Run round and round a room
In search of something, as it
seemed,
Then cloudier become;

And then, obscure with fog,
And then be soldered down,
Without disclosing what it
be,
'Twere blessed to have seen

THE LAST NIGHT THAT SHE LIVED

The last night that she lived,
It was a common night,
Except the dying; this to us
Made nature different.

We noticed smallest things,—
Things overlooked before,
By this great light upon our
minds
Italicized, as 'twere.

That others could exist
While she must finish
quite,
A jealousy for her arose
So nearly infinite.

We waited while she passed;
It was a narrow time,
Too jostled were our souls to
speak,
At length the notice came.

She mentioned, and forgot;
Then lightly as a reed
Bent to the water, shivered
scarce,
Consented, and was dead.

And we, we placed the hair,
And drew the head erect;
And then an awful leisure
was,
Our faith to regulate.

THE BUSTLE IN A HOUSE

The bustle in a house
The morning after death
Is solemnest of industries
Enacted upon earth,—

The sweeping up the heart,
And putting love away
We shall not want to use again
Until eternity.

WHAT INN IS THIS

What inn is this
Where for the night
Peculiar traveller comes?
Who is the landlord?
Where the maids?

Behold, what curious rooms!
No ruddy fires on the hearth,
No brimming tankards flow.
Necromancer, landlord,
Who are these below?

IT WAS NOT DEATH, FOR I STOOD UP

It was not death, for I stood
up,
And all the dead lie down;
It was not night, for all the
bells
Put out their tongues, for
noon.

As if my life were shaven
And fitted to a frame,
And could not breathe with-
out a key;
And 'twas like midnight,
some,

It was not frost, for on my
flesh
I felt siroccos crawl,—
Nor fire, for just my marble
feet
Could keep a chancel cool.

When everything that ticked
has stopped,
And space stares, all around,
Or grisly frosts, first autumn
morns,
Repeal the beating ground.

And yet it tasted like them
all;
The figures I have seen
Set orderly, for burial,
Reminded me of mine,

But most like chaos,—stop-
less, cool,—
Without a chance or spar,
Or even a report of land
To justify despair.

AS BY THE DEAD WE LOVE TO SIT

As by the dead we love to sit,
Become so wondrous dear,
As for the lost we grapple,
Though all the rest are here,—

In broken mathematics
We estimate our prize,
Vast, in its fading ratio,
To our penurious eyes!

John Crowe Ransom

BELLS FOR JOHN WHITESIDE'S DAUGHTER

There was such speed in her little body,
And such lightness in her footfall,
It is no wonder her brown study
Astonishes us all.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.
We looked among orchard trees and beyond,
Where she took arms against her shadow,
Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud
Dripping their snow on the green grass,
Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,
Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little
Lady with rod that made them rise
From their noon apple-dreams and scuttle
Goose-fashion under the skies!

But now go the bells, and we are ready,
In one house we are sternly stopped
To say we are vexed at her brown study,
Lying so primly propped.

CAPTAIN CARPENTER

Captain Carpenter rose up in his prime
Put on his pistols and went riding out
But he got well nigh nowhere at that time
Till he fell in with ladies in a rout.

She taught me Touch, that undulant white skin;
 I nibbled meekly from her proffered hand;
 She was the sickle; I, poor I, the rake,
 Coming behind her for her pretty sake
 (But what prodigious mowing we did make).

Love likes a gander, and adores a goose:
 Her full lips pursed, the errant note to seize;
 She played it quick, she played it light and loose;
 My eyes, they dazzled at her flowing knees;
 Her several parts could keep a pure repose,
 Or one hip quiver with a mobile nose
 (She moved in circles, and those circles moved).

Let seed be grass, and grass turn into hay:
 I'm martyr to a motion not my own;
 What's freedom for? To know eternity.
 I swear she cast a shadow white as stone.
 But who would count eternity in days?
 These old bones live to learn her wanton ways:
 (I measure time by how a body sways).

ELEGY FOR JANE

(My student, thrown by a horse)

I remember the neckcurls, limp and damp as tendrils,
 And her quick look, a sidelong pickerel smile;
 And how, once startled into talk, the light syllables leaped
 for her,
 And she balanced in the delight of her thought,
 A wren, happy, tail in the wind,
 Her song trembling the twigs and small branches,
 The shade sang with her;
 The leaves, their whispers turned to kissing;
 And the mould sang in the bleached valleys under the rose.

Oh, when she was sad, she cast herself down into such a pure
 depth,
 Even a father could not find her:
 Scraping her cheek against straw;
 Stirring the clearest water.

My sparrow, you are not here,
 Waiting like a fern, making a spiny shadow.
 The sides of wet stones cannot console me,
 Nor the moss, wound with the last light.

If only I could nudge you from this sleep,
 My maimed darling, my skittery pigeon.
 Over this damp grave I speak the words of my love:
 I, with no rights in this matter,
 Neither father nor lover.

WAR

Not bad, but miserable
Drenched in gray sadness
Lonely grief handed out to all.

Sarah Mason

AGE 10

UNITED STATES

THE HUNCHBACK IN THE PARK

The hunchback in the park
A solitary mister
Propped between trees and water
From the opening of the garden lock
That let the trees and water enter
Until the Sunday sombre bell at dark,

Eating bread from a newspaper
Drinking water from the chained cup
That the children filled with gravel
In the fountain basin where I sailed my ship
Slept at night in a dog kennel
But nobody chained him up.

Like the park birds he came early
Like the water he sat down
And Mister they called hey Mister
The truant boys from the town
Running when he had heard them clearly
On out of sound

Past lake and rockery
Laughing when he shook his paper
Hunchbacked in mockery
Through the loud zoo of the willow groves
Dodging the park keeper
With his stick that picked up leaves.

And the old dog sleeper
Alone between nurses and swans
While the boys among willows
Made the tiger jump out of their eyes
To roar on the rockery stones
And the groves were blue with sailors

Made all day until bell time
A woman figure without fault
Straight as a young elm
Straight and tall from his crooked bones
That she might stand in the night
After the lock and chains

All night in the unmade park
After the railings and shrubberies
The birds the grass the trees the lake
Had followed the hunchback
And the wild boys innocent as strawberries
To his kennel in the dark.

AND DEATH SHALL HAVE NO
DOMINION

And death shall have no dominion.
Dead men naked they shall be one
With the man in the wind and the west
moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the
clean bones gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall
rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
Under the windings of the sea
They lying long shall not die windily;
Twisting on racks when sinews give way,
Strapped to a wheel, yet they shall not break;
Faith in their hands shall snap in two,
And the unicorn evils run them through;
Split all ends up they shan't crack;
And death shall have no dominion.

And death shall have no dominion.
No more may gulls cry at their ears
Or waves break loud on the seashores;
Where blew a flower may a flower no more
Lift its head to the blows of the rain;
Though they be mad and dead as nails,
Heads of the characters hammer through
daisies;
Break in the sun till the sun breaks down,
And death shall have no dominion.

ESPECIALLY WHEN THE
OCTOBER WIND

Especially when the October wind
With frosty fingers punishes my hair,
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,
By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds,
Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,
My busy heart who shudders as she talks
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her
words.
Shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark
On the horizon walking like the trees

The wordy shapes of women, and the row
Of the star-gestured children in the park.
Some let me make you of the vowel
beeches,
Some of the oaken voices, from the roots
Of many a thorny shire tell you notes,
Some let me make you of the water
speeches.

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock
Tells me the hour's word, the neural meanin
Flies on the shafted disc, declaims the mori
ing
And tells the windy weather in the cock.
Some let me make you of the meadow
signs;

IN MEMORIAM

After the funeral, mule pra
Windshake of sailshaped ear
Tap happily of one peg in th
Grave's foot, blinds down th
The spittled eyes, the salt pe
Morning smack of the spade
Shakes a desolate boy who s
In the dark of the coffin and
That breaks one bone to light
After the feast of tear-stuffe
In a room with a stuffed fox
I stand, for this memorial's s
In the snivelling hours with
Whose hooded, fountain he
Round the parched worlds
(Though this for her is a m
Magnified out of praise; her
She would not have me sin
Flood of her heart's fame; s
And need no druid of her b
But I, Ann's bard on a raise
The seas to service that her
Babble like a bellbuoy over
Bow down the walls of the
That her love sing and swi
Bless her bent spirit with f
Her flesh was meek as mill
With the wild breast and b
Is carved from her in a roo
In a fiercely mourning ho
I know her scrubbed and s

DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
 Because their words had forked no lightning they
 Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
 Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
 Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Norman Nicholson

✍ Norman Nicholson was born January 8, 1914, in the small mining town of Millom, Cumberland, one of the loveliest counties in England, and his verse (to quote Kenneth Rexroth) "has the same peace, care, and mystical stillness that Wordsworth sought, and sometimes found, in the same region." Son of a well-known tradesman in the town, Nicholson actively took part in the everyday life of the people. He was connected with the music festivals, the church work, the cricket club, and the youth movement; he lectured for the Workers' Educational Association. "All this is very different from the life of the literary world," he writes, "with which I have dealings only by correspondence. My home is at the mouth of the Duddon—Wordsworth's favorite river. Thus we have almost on top of one another the sea, industry, and the finest scenery in England."

Nicholson catches some of that juxtaposition in his poetry. The Wordsworthian bucolic note is there, but it is sharpened by a critical observation, hardened by an awareness of man's inhumanity to earth. Nicholson's first book of poems, *Five Rivers* (1945), owes its title to the five little rivers which flow from the western mountains of the English Lake District into the Irish Sea. The volume is almost wholly lyrical in tone, lucid and personal. But it never depends on mere fluidity and the reiterations of the stereotypes dear to the nature-lover's handbook. Nichol-

BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

I FELT A FUNERAL IN MY BRAIN

I felt a funeral in my brain,
And mourners, to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated,
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead, again.
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And Being but an ear,
And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

I HEARD A FLY BUZZ WHEN I DIED

I heard a fly buzz when I died;
The stillness in the room
Was like the stillness in the air
Between the heaves of storm.

The eyes around had wrung them dry,
And breaths were gathering firm
For that last onset, when the king
Be witnessed in the room.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable—and then it was
There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz,
Between the light and me;
And then the windows failed, and then
I could not see to see.