

Waukesha Reads ~ THE BIG READ
2013 Flash Fiction Contest
High School Division Runner-up
Caleb Ebbott

Endless

Life is cruel. As an extension of life, death is cruel as well. It is to some more than others. David learned this the hard way. A speeding chrome monster controlled by a drunken man beat the lesson into David, a child of but ten years. He was not spared to a short death by the impact, but rather subjected to a drawn out session of internal bleeding. His family and friends, as well as the driver (once sober), mourned bitterly in the face of such horrible events. David was laid to rest in the St. Mary's cemetery, alongside many others that had perished before him. He was buried in a small wooden coffin, with his favorite toy and book and his mother's tears of despair. One would think that after death comes a meeting with some omnipotent being, or simply fading into nothingness. But neither of these was the case for David. No, he woke up.

It was not a pleasant awakening, as though he had come out of a peaceful sleep. He awoke to wretched odors and darkness. There was also a severe lack of air in the small coffin he resided in. From the moment he came to consciousness David knew something was wrong. His lungs constricted and expanded desperately for want of breath. He only had the stale earth and the carbon dioxide that was of no use to him and, as such, suffocated within minutes. Then he awoke once more. He soon died again and came back from the void that did not want to receive him. This maddening cycle of death and rebirth continued for what seemed an eternity, millions of thoughts raced through his not yet fully developed mind in between the times he died. Once he thought that he was dead well and truly, and that what he was experiencing now was

divine retribution in hell as he had been taught about in his church. Once he thought that he had never died in the first place and this was all a horrible nightmare. And once he dared to hope he was loud enough that someone would hear his weak cries for help and come to his aid. None of these were true though. The reality was that David was trapped alone in a dark godforsaken box in the ground, with no chance of rescue.

After what might have been years or days, David's spirit was completely broken. The inescapable conclusion that David kept drawing was that he could not die. He wished with all his heart he could, but Immortality seemed something that was not to be dismissed with wishes. There was one side to the situation David was in that was not wholly bad. He had much more time to think in between when he died and woke, or at least the time that was not filled with delirium imposed from his oxygen starved brain. In this time he thought about God, and how the God he had worshiped would not let such a thing happen to a little boy. Seeing as how God was supposed to see and know everything David supposed God must not exist after all. He then realized that no God meant no heaven, and also no hell. So what happened to people who had died? Were all of them like David? Was everyone who was ever buried doomed to die thousands of times before they wasted away into bones and dust?

And with that thought, David died once more. And then he woke up, in bed away from the horrid box and the torture of seemingly endless suffocation. He filled his lungs with air over and over throughout the day and he was thankful for every breath. Right up until his last breath. When he was plowed through with a gleaming chrome car, driven by a man with too much to alcohol in his body. ~

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