

## A Shovel, A Shroud, And A Song

From the moment an entity walks on the stage of history,  
The great dance of life and death begins.

The life dance is filled with opportunities, challenges, and grand projects  
By which the universe itself trembles with creativity and material becoming.  
Is-ness emerges perpetually.

Each entity gathers to itself those forms of matter, memories, and nourishments that make it its unique and  
irreplaceable self.

This tentative swirl of is-ness forms the basis of the universe,  
of the way life overcomes death,  
of the way the universe unfolds daily.

The stage of history teems with countless spiritual centers  
amassing possessions, relationships, and hard-won victories of material creativity.  
Life triumphs briefly.

The dance of death, too, begins.  
No spiritual center can hold on to its amassed is-ness forever,  
No matter how hard it tries.

Imperceptibly slowly, at first, life loses its hold on matter  
The falling away begins.

For those entities that early on made peace with the intertwined nature of life and death,  
This transition becomes a vitalizing part of the dance.  
It cannot be stopped.

Centers of selfhood surrounding the dying entity help in the grand dissolution  
By caring for significant pieces acquired on the long journey of life,  
By giving them new homes on the stage of history.

Each entity that walks onto the stage of history requires, eventually, a final resting place –  
a forever home.

At the end, the dying entity requires help from its friends to make the final transition  
to the other side of the gossamer veil.  
It needs a shovel, a shroud, and a song.

In the end, no being is left with the psychic or physical strength to unearth its own final resting place.  
A shovel in strong hands is required.

Every entity brings noble energy to the long dance of life, for its final journey it will be clothed in a shroud.  
A simple cardboard box or a tapestry with fine woven designs. Both suffice.

On the final passage to the other side, the dying spirit is borne on the wings of song,  
The eternal carrier of spirit.

No being can sing its own song, this is the final task of those who care.

F. Nelson Stover  
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For Nick Divitci who helped show the way with dignity