

Death in death, be not proud by john donne

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Death, Be Not Proud, by John Donne is a poem that directly addresses death, searching to deprive it of its powers arguing that dying from fate, is more powerful than death itself. The speaker paints a picture of death as an arrogant, and a super proud being. He tells him that he must not be so proud, even though centuries of people have feared death and called him “mighty and dreadful.”

The speaker treats death like a person who is considered “high up,” which is personified. A term to describe this is an apostrophe, he is addressing death directly, even though death can’t respond. The speaker begins with a strong quatrain, “For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow.” stating that the majority of them are christians. In that context, cristians shouldn’t be scared of death. In christianity, we all go off to somewhere better than this world. Death does not cause them to fall, but helps them to rise. Death is the reason that a man finds Resurrection.

The speaker first humbles death by telling him that he has the power to kill, but truthfully he has no power at all. He then states that death is an object of pity, “poor death”. The speaker challenges death in a more personal manner, he challenges him by saying “nor yet canst thou kill me.” The speaker clearly argues against death being treated as something strong and important. In essence, he reasons that nobody who dies is actually dead. Death is compared to sleep, which is one of the most beneficial activities for all humans. The speaker uses the adjective “pleasure,” while talking about death. Just as napping bring us joy, so should death. Consequently, there is nothing to fear in death, because death is just a pleasurable sleep. The “best man...” follow death into the afterlife, thinking he gives their bones a

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rest, and a free delivery for their christian souls from all the pain of earthly life. The speaker begins to taunt death with more power than before. He calls death a “ slave to change, kings and desperate men.” Death is not as mighty as said before, but rather a slave. He offends death and tells him that he is not to be feared, but just a slave to the will of fate, and that as a humble slave. The speaker tells death that he doesn’t have control over Anybody, and is instead controlled by others. Death can’t choose how people die, it is left to chance and fate. Chance is luck, anyone can die at anytime. King are different because they are real people, and they have control over others unlike death. A king can send a soldier to die in the war or execute people. Lastly, desperate men refer to people who do stupid stuff to kill themselves. This pushes the readers to feel a sense of power and victory over death. Even as a form of rest, death isn’t all that impressive. The speaker mentions that “ poppy” and “ charms” are a better balance of obtaining rest. ADDHe then asks death, what it actually has to be prideful about. The speaker clearly states that this aggression is misplaced, because nobody ever truthfully dies.

In the final lines of the poem, which form a couplet, it explains that death is real, and that people experience death do not come back to earth. The speaker claims that death is only “ one short sleep” and that the individuals who experience death with “ wake eternally.” That is, we will wake up resurrected to eternal life, never to sleep or die again. Finally, he proposes that death has no real power over anyone, but that he will experience the end of himself when all wake in eternity and death will be no more.