**After Death**

**Some people, though dead, can still be very entertaining. What right have dead people to affect our lives? And yet they are constantly doing so.** (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)

**The day after you die is the first day after the rest of your life. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)***

**195: Deceased people whose ashes will be shot into space in rockets this spring, including James Doohan, who played Scotty on Star Trek. $5,300: Highest price charged by Space Services Inc. for the trip – less than the average terrestrial funeral costs. *((Time magazine, March 6, 2006)***

**An elderly Brooklyn woman told her friend she wanted to be cremated when she died and her ashes scattered over Bloomingdale's. “Why Bloomingdale's? her friend asked. “So I'll know my daughter will visit me twice a week.”** (Rocky Mountain News)

**The miserly millionaire called a family conference. “I'm placing a box of money in the attic,” he said. “When I die, I intend to grab it on my way up to heaven. See to it that no one touches it until it's my time to go.” The family respected his wishes. After his death the millionaire's wife looked in the attic. The box was still there. “The fool!” she said. “I told him he should have put it in the basement.”** (Gene Jennings, in Reader's Digest)

Rather than be buried or cremated, I think I would like to be bronzed sitting in my Jacuzzi, spouting hot water all over the city. I hope the law allows it. (Liz Carpenter)

**I’m always relieved when someone delivers a eulogy and I realize I’m listening to it. *(George Carlin)***

**For three days after death hair and fingernails continue to grow but phone calls taper off. (Johnny Carson)**

After I’m dead I’d rather have people ask why I have no monument than why I have one. (Cato the Elder)

**Ancient Egyptians so respected their pet cats that they mummified them, then entombed them with mummified mice so they'd have something to eat in the thereafter.** (L. M. Boyd)

**A young man, walking home late one night, decided to take a shortcut through the cemetery. Suddenly, he fell into a newly dug grave. Several minutes later a drunk strolled through the cemetery and heard a voice calling from below, “I'm freezing down here.” He walked over to the fresh pit, peered over the edge and said, “No wonder. You kicked all your dirt off.” *(Debbie P. Wright, in Reader's Digest)***

**One says to another who is placing flowers on a grave at the cemetery: “Do I hear chimes?” Second one: “They buried him with his cell phone.”** (Brant Parker & Johnny Hart, in Wizard of ID comic strip)

**Communication with the dead is only a little more difficult than communication with some of the living.** (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)

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**Grandma: “You ever watch that John Edward guy on TV who helps people talk to their dead relatives?” Other woman: “Uh huh.” Grandma: “I wonder if he could help contact my first husband.” Other woman: “I thought Earl was your first husband.” As they observe Earl sleeping in the chair, Grandma responds: “He is.” *(Brian Crane, in Pickles comic strip)***

**Ever had contact with the dead? One survey purports to prove 40 percent of the people in America believe they have.** (L. M. Boyd)

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**For the first time, more Americans are being cremated than having traditional burials, according to the National Funeral Directors Association. The cremation rate in 2016 achieved a milestone, edging past 50 percent to 50.2 percent, up from 48.5 percent in 2015. The association is predicting that by 2035, nearly 80 percent of people who die will be cremated. (The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 1, 2017)**

**As the Covid-19 death toll continues to mount, Los Angeles air-quality regulations have lifted a cap on the number of daily cremations. The cap is in place to limit the toxic fumes produced by burning the mercury fillings in corpses’ teeth. But officials deemed the current backlog of some 2,700 dead bodies an even greater “threat to public health.” (The Week magazine, January 29, 2021)**

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**Did you hear about the crossword puzzle addict who died? He was buried six feet down and three feet across.** (Good Clean Jokes - Harvest House)

**Be careful when you dance around my grave – it might revive me.** (Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)

**The recently widowed lady with a new diamond ring explained how she got it: “He left $1,000 for a casket and $5,000 for a stone. This is the stone." *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Once a rich man said he would divide his fortune among his friends, if only he knew who they were. Years passed and the man died – in a mid-winter blizzard. His last request was that his funeral be held at 4 o’clock in the morning. Although scores had boasted of being his intimate friend, only three men and one woman turned out to stand sadly beside his grave. When the will was read, it directed that his estate be divided equally among those who attended his funeral. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**A doctor who had devoted his life to helping the underprivileged lived over a liquor store in the poor section of a large city. In front of the liquor store was a sign reading: “Dr. Williams is upstairs.” When he died, he had no relatives and he left no money for his burial. He had never asked for payment from anyone he had ever treated. Friends and patients scraped enough money together to bury the good doctor, but they had no money for a tombstone. It appeared that his grave was going to be unmarked until someone came up with a wonderful suggestion. They took the sign from in front of the liquor store and nailed it to a post over his grave. It made a lovely epitaph: “Dr. Williams is upstairs.” *(Bits & Pieces)***

**After our dog died, my parents had her cremated, and they placed the ashes in a special box on the fireplace mantel. One day the boy next door came over to play and noticed the fancy container. “What in the box?” he asked. “That’s our dog,” my mom replied. “Oh,” the boy simply said. A minute later he remarked, “He’s awfully quiet, isn’t he?” *(John Ference, in Reader’s Digest)***

**On September 30, 1920, Thomas Edison submitted an article to American Magazine in which he claimed to be working on an invention that could communicate with the dead. After the devastation of World War I, many folks were interested in communicating with lost loved ones. Edison believed that spiritualism and Ouija boards were nonsense, but that science might bear a breakthrough. His "spirit phone" would use a tiny beam of light to detect the smallest particles of life remaining after a person died, proving that their spirit was still present. If light bulbs and phonographs were technological miracles, why not the spirit phone? (The Daily Chronicle)**

**Good week for The King, after Elvis Presley regained his proper berth as the world’s highest-earning dead celebrity. Presley, who will earn an estimated $49 million this year, was edged out in 2006 by Nirvana front man Kurt Cobain. *(The Week magazine, November 9, 2007)***

**Some primitive New Guinea tribes – to embalm their dead – simply smoke the remains. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**New York City area funeral homes are now holding virtual services, while limiting those paying their respects in person to immediate family. Some cemeteries are prohibiting mourners from leaving their vehicles or bidding farewell until after grave workers finish burying the dead. *(New York Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 3, 2020)***

**Paul Harvey tells an amusing story about some airline baggage handlers who retrieved an animal carrier from the luggage bay of an airliner. As they removed the carrier, they made a gruesome discovery: the dog inside was dead. The baggage handlers panicked. They thought there might be lawsuits, and they might even lose their jobs. They told the woman passenger that her dog had been sent to another destination by mistake. It was not at all uncommon for baggage to be sent to the wrong city. They promised her they would find her dog and have it delivered to her. With that assurance, the woman went home. The baggage handlers then buried the woman's pet. Afterward, they set out to find another dog to replace the animal that had died. Finally, they found a dog that was a dead ringer for this woman's pet. They put the substitute dog in the animal carrier and sent it to the woman's address. The woman took one look at the dog and exclaimed, “That's not my dog! My dog is dead,” she told them. “I was bringing it home for burial.” *(Paul Harvey, in For What It's Worth)***

**Nurse Hathaway: “Why are you under the sheet?” Patient: “Because I’ve been dead for the past two days.” Nurse Hathaway: “But you’re still suffering from persistent headaches?” Patient: “Oh boy, am I ever.” Nurse Hathaway: “And what brought on these headaches?” Patient: “Death.” (ER)**

It’s funny the way most people love the dead. Once you’re dead, you’re made for life. (Jimi Hendrix)

**My sister sent this to me years ago: “The preacher came to call the other day, and he said that at my age, I should be thinking of the hereafter. “I told him I do all the time, no matter where I am. Whether I’m in the parlor, upstairs, in thekitchen or down in the baseement, I ask myself, ‘Now what am I here after?” *(Avanell McCutcheon, in Reminisce Extra magazine)***

Alexander the Great was not the only human interred in a crock of honey. Ancient Egyptians routinely buried many of their dead that way. (L. M. Boyd)

How come Orthodox Jews won’t use metal caskets for burial? Anything that prevents integration of the body with the soil is prohibited. (L. M. Boyd)

**The dead leave clues, and life is a puzzle of trying to read and understand these mysterious hints before the game is over. (Samantha Hunt, writer)**

**Man is the only species that buries its dead. (L. M. Boyd)**

**The easiest job in the world has to be coroner. Surgery on dead people. What's the worst thing that could happen? If everything went wrong, maybe you'd get a pulse.** (Dennis Miller, in Reader's Digest)

After I'm dead I'd rather have people ask why I have no monument than why I have one. (Cato the Elder, Roman historian)

**General Gaishi Nagaoka, known as the father of Japan's first air force, sported a mustache 22 inches long. When he died in 1933, the mustache, too, was buried with full honors. Beside him. In a separate coffin.** (L. M. Boyd)

**My last request: In my obituary, do not print a 50-year-old picture of me -- my friends won't recognize me. And don't print a picture of me smiling because it will look like I'm happy to be dead.** (Kerley, in S.C.U.C.A. Regional Reporter)

In their rituals to mourn the dead, the ancients painted their bodies black long before their eventual descendents wore black clothing. (L. M. Boyd)

**Movie publicists in the 1930s put pet obituaries in newspapers on behalf of film stars, wherein said stars bid gentle goodbyes to dead dogs, cats, canaries, whatever. Made a pretty good impression, advertising some movies and activating another business: pet cemeteries. *(L. M. Boyd)***

That countless pioneers died along the old Oregon Trail is known. But not often is it reported that most of them were buried in accordance with a custom of the journey – heads pointing west. (L. M. Boyd)

**My husband wanted to be cremated. I told him I’d scatter his ashes at Neiman Marcus – that way, I’d visit him every day. *(Joan Rivers)***

**An Australian farmer who was forced to miss a beloved aunt's funeral because of pandemic restrictions found a novel way to pay his respects: with a drone-shot video of hundreds of sheep arranged in a heart shape. "It took me a few goes to get it right," said Ben Jackson of New South Wales. He'd started using food to lure the sheep to make shapes during the pandemic. "It certainly lifted my spirits," he said. The heart was a big hit on social media. "Maybe we all just need to give ourselves a big virtual hug," Jackson said. *(The Week magazine, September 10 / September, 2021)***

**Up to about a hundred years ago the custom of “sin-eating" was widespread in England and in the Highlands of Scotland. When someone died, the official village sin-eater was notified. He went at once to the house of the deceased, sat on a stool near the door, and consumed a groat, a crust of bread, and a bowl of ale. When finished he would rise and announce the peace of the departed soul, for whom he thus had just traded his own soul. For some people I can think of, it would take a lot more than a groat and a crust of bread!** (Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 7)

One day a telemarketer called a number and asked for Mr. Morgan. The woman who answered said he no longer lived there, but she had a number where he could be reached. The telemarketer thanked the woman, called the number and was greeted with, “Good morning, Highland View Cemetery.” (Rocky Mountain News)

**Still a tough room to get a laugh in: The funeral home business is getting livelier, said Charles Passy in MarketWatch.com. In response to the demand from families looking to “coordinate separate events – meaning a funeral service, a burial, and a gathering at a restaurant – in the same day,” parlors built additional event spaces. The expanded spaces, in turn, have prompted entrepreneurial undertakers to consider ways to “create a new income stream” by renting out the locations for other functions. The Flanner Buchanan Funeral Center, with 17 locations in the Indianapolis area, hosts about 500 non-funeral events annually, including weddings, meetings, and recently even a jazz concert. New York City’s Frank E. Campbell funeral chapel, where celebrities like Joan Rivers have been eulogized, is even hosting a “pure night of stand-up comedy” this month. The performers are unfazed by the surroundings. “A room is a room,” veteran comic Elyse DeLucci said. *(The Week magazine, August 13, 2021)***

**Twenty years after 9/11, the New York City medical examiner’s office is using advanced DNA testing techniques on 22,000 body parts recovered from the twin towers, looking for matches for the 1,106 victims whose remains were never found. Most are bone fragments, many as small as a Tic-Tac. It’s “a sacred obligation,” said the city’s chief medical examiner. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 24, 2021)***

**Nobody knows where the body of Voltaire is. It was stolen from its tomb in the nineteenth century and has never been recovered. The theft was discovered in 1864, when the tomb was opened and found empty.** (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts, p. 124)

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