

"Death"

By Katherine Philips

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Death.

1 How weak a Star doth rule Mankind, ^{Star},
2 Which owes its ruine to the same
3 Causes which Nature had design'd
4 To cherish and preserve the frame!

5 As Commonwealths may be secure,
6 And no remote Invasion dread;
7 Yet may a sadder fall endure
8 From Traitors in their bosom bred:

9 So while we feel no violence,
10 And on our active Health do trust,
11 A secret hand doth snatch us hence,
12 And tumbles us into the dust.

13 Yet carelesly we run our race,
14 As if we could Death's summons wave;
15 And think not on the narrow space, ^{narrow_space}
16 Between a Table and a Grave.

17 But since we cannot Death reprove,
18 Our Souls and Fame we ought to mind,
19 For they our Bodies will survive;
20 That goes beyond, this stays behind.

21 If I be sure my Soul is safe,
22 And that my Actions will provide
23 My Tomb a nobler Epitaph, ^{Epitaph}
24 Then that I onely liv'd and dy'd.

25 So that in various accidents, ^{Accidents}
26 I Conscience may and Honour keep;
27 I with that ease and innocence
28 Shall die, as Infants go to sleep.

Footnotes

Star Compared to the universe's other stars, the sun was considered weak.

narrow_spaca limited lifespan; from the table, where life begins, to the grave, where it ends.

Epitaph A tribute written in memory of a deceased person, often as an inscription on a tombstone (Oxford English Dictionary).

Accident Events that happen by chance or without expectation. Sometimes with a negative connotation, as in being unfortunate or unforeseen (Oxford English Dictionary).