

Speaking of Death- (a brief word-play)

By uma anyar

They were talking about more than the weather when She told him she wasn't afraid of dying. But she did fear the pain of dying. He noted this with a slight nod of his head.

She-Are you afraid of dying?

He-Not dying itself, after all there is nothing we can do about it. Is there?

She-You mean there is nothing we can do about death?

He-Yes, Death. The grime reaper, the last hurrah, the final curtain call or whatever euphemism you want to use.

She-Nothing can be done. About death but there is all that life we have to worry about.

He-Do we have to worry about it? Or can we just get on with it?

She-On with it?

He-You know, just live it.

She-But doesn't everybody already do that?

He-Yea, I guess they do. But I meant LIVE it fully, like really enjoy it or get a lot out of it?

She- But don't you already do that?

He-Well... yes and no.

She looks up at him and watches him swallow his own spit. He is nervous, this is making him nervous, she thinks. And smiles secretly inside herself.

He-I mean, I suppose everyone... including me, could learn to live better.

She- You think you need to learn to live better?

He-I said everyone. Well, yes me, I should learn to live better.

She-Where would you learn such things? Are there schools that teach such things?

He frowned. He had not gotten that far in his consideration.

He- I suppose there are.

She-Where are they?

He- I don't know, he said, a shade too irritable.

She- I bet they are in Japan, or China. Or Tibet or India or someplace in the East, the Far East.

He-How Far East?

She-Stop quibbling. Do you think one needs Philosophy or religion to live better?

He-Neither, One needs a path.

She-Like the yellow brick road?

He-No that's fiction

He-Can't fiction be a path?

He-Not a proper path.

She-Why not?

He-Because it isn't realty. It is just made up stuff.

She-And Religion and Philosophy are not?

He- Ha ,ha- very funny.

She- So how do we or you or more importantly I find a way to live better before I die.

He-You have to decide on some kind of way to live, or someone or something to live for,

She- You mean.. like a cause or a husband and children, sort of thing?

He- Well, kinda, but it could be more abstract. Like making the world a better place, or just doing creative stuff.

She-So are helpers and artists happier than sales girls or bankers or sportstars or...

He-Wait, no that's to cut and dry. It has more to do with the quality of life, the quality of every moment.

She-That takes a lot of money.

He- Quality of life?

She-Yea quality costs more. I've heard it said ... and more than once.

He-No, not that kind a quality, I mean real quality.

She-What is real quality?

He- The real kind, you know the good kind not the material kind.. or not the material kind alone. But with the spiritual layer built in.

She-Do you mean that if you have a certain amount of money or comfort stuff *and* a spiritual practice that you have a quality life? That you have it made in the shade?

He- I didn't mean it like that. Ok what is more important the material stuff or the spiritual stuff.?

She- The spiritual stuff, I guess.

He-But you don't want to give up the stuff comforts.

She-Well... no, not really. And why do you have to make it either or? Can't it be both?

He- You mean having your cake and eating it too?

She- No .. yes.. but more like a delicate balance of both.

He- I thought we were talking about death. How did we get on this quality of life riff?

She- Haven't you ever noticed how *Life* is so relentless. It just takes over everything. It is always moving on, forgetting as it goes. Death has a hell of a time keeping up with *life*.

He starts to say something but stops himself, sips his coffee and thinks in silence. She joins him.