

MORE FOR THOSE WHO ARE NO MORE

Words that live to tell about the dead. By DP Sabharwal

Margaret Dorothy is gone. She is survived by six of her eight children whom she spent her lifetime torturing in every way possible. On behalf of her children whom she so abrasively exposed to her evil and violent life, we celebrate her passing from this earth and hope she lives in the after-life reliving each gesture of violence, cruelty, and shame that she delivered on her children," was an insertion in the obituary columns in Dailydot.com recently.

Obituary writers of every hue and cry such as life-partners, children, friends, relatives or the employees usually follow a do-not-speak-ill-of-the-dead policy.

It is however a universal fact that exception is always there and in fact 'exceptions prove the rule.' This explains the reason for the family in the US to have given an abusive mother the above-quoted brutal send-off!

Other than the obituary, there has been a custom in many of the countries to write an epitaph which is a short phrase or a poem inscribed on the gravestone of the deceased. Epitaphs are often dictated or inspired by the decedent's life, profession, achievements or special traits either mentioned genuinely or otherwise.

Praise and mild taunt: the oft-repeated epitaph has been 'Rest in Peace' and 'May God be with you'. There is many a time praise for the deceased as can be seen from this one. "As the flowers are all made sweeter by the sunshine and the dew, so this old world is made brighter by the lives of folks like you." Yet, many a times there is a mild taunt, as mild as the whispering wind that can be felt from the following few:

- Here lies an atheist, all dressed up; and no place to go.
- Sir John Strange, here lies an honest lawyer, and that is strange.
- Here lies Ned, there is nothing more to be said because we like to speak well of the dead.

Befitting description: Epitaph writing is definitely an art that can be equated to the great Hindi proverb 'gagar mein sagar' (the sea in a pitcher)! The really good ones comprising just a line or two catch your attention instantly.

- Here lies the body of John Round. Lost at sea and never found.

- On the 22nd of June; Jonathan Fiddle went out of tune.
- Jeddah Goodwin, Auctioneer: Born 1828. Going! Going!! Gone!!! 1876.
- Here lies the body of William Blake, stepped on the gas instead of the brake.
- Christians stand still and pray a bit, here lies the farmer Smear; he had to pay too dearly for his sin: he died of self-brewed beer.
- Here lies the body of our Anna done to death by a banana. It wasn't the fruit that laid her low, but the skin of the thing that made her go.

The solemn vow: "We shall be together for the whole life," is the most common vow individuals across various communities and religions take while getting married. It is the other part of the vow "only the death shall do us apart," that comes into play while writing the epitaph for the departed partner. Not everyone is lucky to have a gravestone but then there are many fortunate ones. There have been many pleasing and at times not-so-pleasing but nonetheless interesting epitaphs that have adorned the grave stones of such a lucky few!



HERE LIES THE BODY OF OUR ANNA DONE TO DEATH BY A BANANA. IT WASN'T THE FRUIT THAT LAID HER LOW, BUT THE SKIN OF THE THING THAT MADE HER GO.



- Here lies my wife, and let her lie; for she is in peace, and so am!
- She lived with her husband for 50 years and died in the confident hope of a better life.
- Here lies Elizabeth, my wife for 47 years and this is the first damn thing she has ever done to oblige me.

Taking no chances: There have been smart individuals, who thought of denying the privilege to others to do the honours after death by way of writing their own epitaph.

- Here lies Johnny Yeast: pardon me for not rising.
- I came into this world without my consent, and left in the same manner.
- Reader, I've left this world, in which I had a world to do; Sweating and fretting to get rich; just such a fool as as you.

URBAN PICTURES **Alive**





PHOTO COMPETITION

Your enthusiastic response to **Alive Photo Competition** has been very encouraging. Henceforth, we are making some changes in the format of Photo Competition. Kindly send only urban pictures.



I am sending along with this coupon ☐☐ photograph(s) for **ALIVE PHOTO COMPETITION**.

I agree to all the terms and conditions of the competition and certify that the photographs sent are my own personal work and have not been published or utilised in any manner anywhere else previously.

Name (IN BLOCK LETTERS)_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Pin code_____

Country_____ Email:_____

A Delhi Press Magazine: E-3, Jhandewala Estate, Rani Jhansi Marg, New Delhi-110055. www.caravanalive.com