

## Why Do We Die?

Houston Hodges, for Writer's Corner, WLRH Radio Huntsville, AL USA

Why DO people die? That question has occurred since the first human death occurred, sometime back. *If* (just supposing), we're made the way the bible book of Genesis proclaims — "in the image of God!" — or perfect — where does mortality creep into that package, since presumably God lasts forever?

I continue to be amazed at the so-called "coincidences" that make things work right... the earth tilted on its axis so that half the year the earth is closer to the sun, half the year farther away... so we get springtime blooms and autumn leaves. I giggle at the ridiculous construction of our reproductive system, centered in the same system that removes waste from our bodies. What a hoot! I learned to be grateful for freezing weather, reducing the mosquito population, which otherwise would overwhelm us. But along with these other examples of intelligent design, there come other features that result in our departing from this life, and our arriving in another venue. Hearts wear out, and they beat so often they stop working; bones erode their slippery surface and start grinding on other bones, and that hurts. Brains get tired, from working too many crossword puzzles (or some other reason), and stop percolating. Others of us buy a ticket on the wrong railroad train and end that ride smashed to smithereens.

So why — my companion on the Quest — why do these fallible flaws have to be part of our very existence, the common possession of every human?

Well, first of all, I don't know. The answers to the biggest questions are usually guesswork. But it seems to me that the answer is something like, "So more of us can take on the job of living." or else there wouldn't be space for all of us if there weren't a way out. Being human consists not only of breathing, and pumping blood, and firing synapses... it also means striving, deciding trying, failing, and trying again, and wearing out. We think this is somehow different from the way guinea pigs work, or butterflies, or microbes, whose job it is to do their job, and then depart. Come to think of it, isn't it a trade worth taking? Aren't you willing to give up living forever, in exchange for the chance to create? And love? — And try? — And try again?