

## Small Deaths and Rebirths

As a child, one is born with clear vision of what is within and without. And as the sands of time filter away, the vision begins to cloud and blur. The experience of life often rips away at the innocence within, leaving it to die screaming. The honest child within learns the harsh lessons of the human condition. Some never recover. Some fall on their swords in an attempt to rid themselves of the growing pains. Some persevere though hardened and disillusioned. The stark and unforgiving terrain that is sometimes life takes its toll on what remains and in the process one can become blind to the truth. Blind with intent or otherwise, perhaps it is a fantasy that we all need. A maladaptive fantasy in truth because we often choose to hide from the true reality. The reality is that living, truly living is an extraordinary experience not all are able to live through and tell the tale. Within that living, one experiences small deaths that bear dire consequences for the survival of one's soul. But with those small deaths, there are small rebirths. With each rebirth, one is given the opportunity to resurrect the dead within. Living can resemble a purgatory seemingly inescapable, but it often brings with it its own paradise. And this paradise presents in the forms and shapes of people and experiences that reawaken the parts of oneself thought to be nothing but ash and bone. The resurrection of old traits and characteristics brings forth an opportunity to look within both lovingly and critically. A newfound perspective is to be found in the aftermath of a small death and rebirth. One will find that these small deaths and rebirths, like growing pains, will cause discomfort, rage, anxiety, and dread. But as a new-born is pained by that first breath, one will inevitably feel the pains of learning, discarding, and rebuilding. Adaptation is survival guaranteed.

Looking into oneself brings discomfort because we can be our own worst enemy. We can be our most honest confidant and yet hide away the honest truths just so the reflection in the mirror is a little bit more palatable. But these lies we tell ourselves are often accompanied by self-aggrandisement, further feeding the delusion, and cementing the denial of self-examination.

Our relation to those that surround us serve as a conduit for self-growth, for all those we meet will mirror our most vulnerable and hidden parts. One can either run from that reflection or face it and become enlightened. That enlightenment does bring with it painful revelations but tremendous freedom. It brings with it the death of inhibitions and the birth of one's authentic self. Though terrifying, the rewards to be reaped are everlasting. It requires courage, patience, conviction, all qualities one naturally possesses within. At times it takes the efforts of others to unearth these qualities. Thus, our journey to self-discovery and growth is dependent on community.

The community that one surrounds themselves with determines the strength of one's roots. And in all of one's small deaths and small rebirths, there are guides to protect and light the way.