

Der Tod und das Leben
Death and Life
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Translated by Sharma Swadesh

Life says to Death:
I'm afraid of you.
Death says to Life:
But you need have no fear of me
For I always come only after you.

Sometimes you come too early,
Says Life.
You don't so much as ever knock.
Simply enter unsolicited
and throw your weight around.
But how should I be doing that, says Death.
I, who am only a skeleton.
I only do my work, as you do.

Sometimes, says Life,
I give away my creatures only unwillingly.
Sometimes you fight for them like a fury,
Says Death.
Then I am almost afraid of you.
And I admire you.
I never have to wrestle and fight for someone.
I come and wait,
until you can fight no longer
until you have overexerted and drained yourself and
until, exhausted, drained and
crying in desperation, you give your creatures up.
Then I take them with me.
It is so simple.

Sometimes, says Life,
I myself want to go with you.
Simply let all be, let all lie
and to never more have to know anything about anything.
Come with me, says Death.
It stretches its bony hand out.
I can't, says Life.

I have no offspring. I am needed here.

Come with me,
says Death once again.
It clasps exhausted Life
in its bony arms.
And so they remain a good while
closely entwined,
Death and Life.
How warm and full of life you are,
says Death.
How good you smell.

Take me along,
says Life.
I can't,
says Death.