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A PHILOSOPHICAL GUIDE

LUC BOVENS

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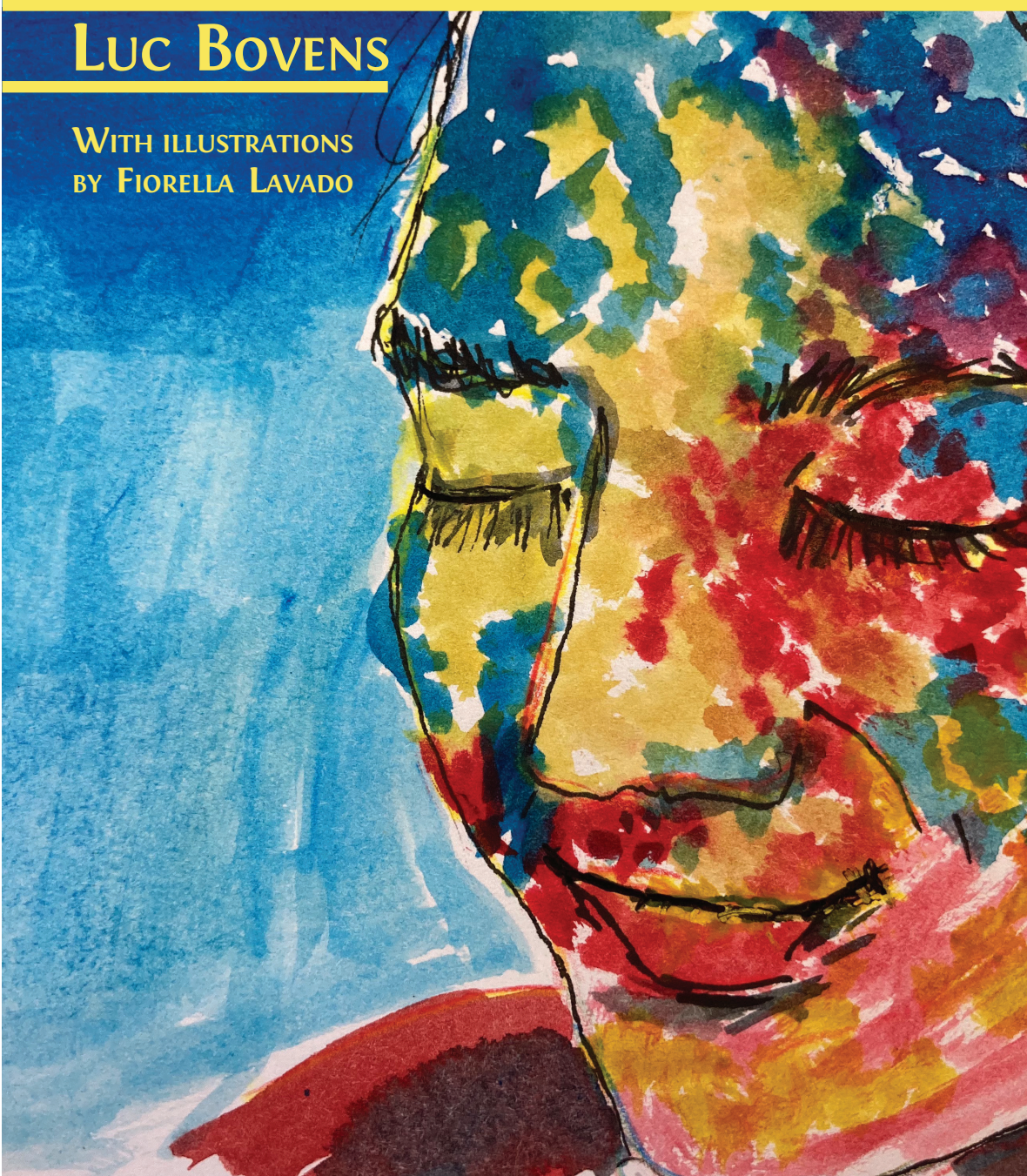

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2. Death

Eternal Life?

Kant poses three perennial questions in *The Critique of Pure Reason*: '1. What can I know? 2. What ought I to do? 3. What may I hope?' The last question is mainly a question of religion for Kant: Do I have any basis to hope for eternal life?

Many people do not hold out any hope for eternal life. Why don't they? After all, even if eternal life strikes them as unlikely, they could still hope for it, as one hopes to win the lottery. There is an obvious answer: they just attach no credibility to any talk about the supernatural. The prospect of eternal life is no more likely than the existence of wood nymphs and leprechauns for them. And one cannot hope for what one deems to be impossible.

But this is not the only ground why one might not hope for eternal life. When Einstein was asked whether he believed in immortality, he answered: 'No. And one life is enough for me.' (Walter Isaacson, *Einstein: His Life and Universe*, Ch. 17.) The 'no' part of Einstein's answer is a statement of disbelief. But the 'one life is enough' part is different. Compare this with a more mundane exchange: 'Do you think that there is more cake?' 'No. And one piece of cake is enough for me.' The response signals that one simply has no desire for another piece of cake. And that's how Einstein felt about eternal life.

Why might one not desire eternal life? One may have preferred not to have lived at all. So why would one want to live more, let alone into eternity? There is also a less morose attitude that could underlie not desiring eternal life. One may find beauty in the ephemeral, as one finds beauty in spring flowers. Life is good as it is, and making it last longer, let alone forever, would not make it any better.

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Furthermore, some people also refrain from hoping for eternal life because they feel that they have nothing to latch onto, and hoping requires, as we saw earlier, a kind of mental imaging—that is, our imagination should somehow be involved in hoping.

Alexa's parents take her to the seaside every summer. She is hoping for summer to come—the prospect of building sand castles, going for a swim… One year they tell her that they are planning to go on a vacation to Switzerland the coming summer. She is confident that this will be fun, but she does not do much in the way of hoping that year. She has no idea what a vacation in the mountains will be like and hence it does not engage her imagination. Similarly, immortality is 'so huge, so hopeless to conceive,' writes Emily Dickinson. If visions of angelic choirs don't do it for you, then there is no place for the imagination to go to.

So then, what is there to hope for at the end of life, if not eternal life? There are broadly four secular hopes to explore: We hope that our life was worthwhile, we hope to die well, we hope that the future will be good, and we hope that people will hold certain attitudes toward us when we are no more. All these hopes raise a host of philosophical questions. Those who do hope for eternal life should find these hopes of interest as well, since the hope for eternal life may coexist and be interwoven with secular hopes.

A Worthwhile Life

I was talking to a friend who is a retired medical doctor and now spends his days in archives doing genealogy. The only thing in life that he was genuinely proud of, he told me, was having uncovered his family tree. Having this to his name gives him a sense of satisfaction. Genealogy never engaged me much, but I have always felt envious of the medical profession when it comes to giving meaning to one's life. If healing the sick and alleviating the pain of our fellow human beings does not give meaning to life, then what does? So, I responded: 'What about your patients?' He shrugged his shoulders and replied: 'Nothing of that work will remain—most of them are dead by now, all of them will die someday.'

In old age, it is common to look back and ask: 'Was my life worthwhile?' But what sort of things do we invoke to determine whether our lives were worthwhile? My friend has a particular answer in mind.

It is the very same answer that Horace gives when reflecting on having written the *Odes*. He writes 'And now 'tis done: more durable than brass/ My monument shall be, and raise its head/ O'er royal pyramids.' This will bestow a kind of immortality on him: 'I shall not wholly die: large residue/ Shall 'scape the queen of funerals.' A family tree may not be quite in the same league as the *Odes*, but the aspiration is similar. What we have to say for ourselves at the end of life is that we have made a mark, that we have achieved something sizeable and grand that we can pass on to posterity.

What makes an achievement sizeable or grand? What is the measure for this? Think of being successful at raising a family. Some people may shrug their shoulders and say: 'What's so big about that? Families have been raised since the dawn of humankind.' But that is certainly setting the bar too high. If what it requires to have a worthwhile life is to do something out of the ordinary, few worthwhile lives would have been lived. We cannot all be special and stand out. Rather, we should be looking for achievements that make a sizeable difference for the better, carried forward into a future in which we are no more. Successfully raising a family certainly fits the bill.

Must our achievement leave a trace into a future when we are no more? Horace might want to put the tomes he wrote on a shelf next to his death bed, but this certainly cannot be the only way to make a case for having lived a worthwhile life. In talking to my friend, I pointed to the sizeable achievement of a lifetime of healing and alleviating pain. What does it matter that one outlives one's patients and that nothing remains? There was much goodness at the time that the service was performed.

The same holds for the arts. Works of architecture, music, and literature may stretch beyond one's death. This is less so for the performing arts, but still, one contributes to the development of a style. There are no proper recordings of Nijinsky's ballets, but they remain a defining moment in the history of dance. But what about a more mundane art form such as DJ'ing? There is pride in throwing the greatest party, making the dance floor burn until the early hours. Nothing remains, but what does it matter? There is beauty in the ephemeral. And in old age, our DJ may look back and reminisce about all the joy and rapture they brought to so many dance venues. They may say that this made it

all worthwhile, just as my friend could, in the same way, look back on a lifetime of healing, even though all his patients are long dead and gone.

Must achievements be sizeable, must they be grand, however conceived, for a life to be worthwhile? Dickinson writes: 'If I can […] help one fainting robin/ Unto his nest again,/ I shall not live in vain.' The persona that Dickinson assumes in her poetry did not strive to do grand things. What made her life worthwhile was to make small and simple differences. Helping the proverbial robin makes life no less worthwhile than performing, say, the first heart transplant.

On one conception of assessing whether our lives were worthwhile, we ask how much of a difference we have made and to how many people. The grander the achievement, the more worthwhile we take our lives to be. But on another conception, this is a mistake. The difference that we can make lies in small and simple contributions, and that is what makes our lives fully worthwhile. There is no calculus. There is no stacking of good deeds to shore up the edifice of a worthwhile life. Just like there is beauty in the ephemeral, there is beauty in what is small and simple.

We have seen examples of the grand and enduring (Horace), the grand and ephemeral (the DJ), and the small and ephemeral (the fainting robin). What about the small and the enduring? There is a Chinese story of an old man who wanted to move a mountain that was blocking the sun. (Giddens and Giddens, *Chinese Mythology*, p. 39.) When he was mocked for hauling wheelbarrow loads of stones, the old man responded that his descendants would carry on his work and that the mountain would eventually be moved. Scientists may see their professional life in this light—their contributions may have been small, but they are worthwhile because they are part of a larger endeavor, and this larger endeavor is what is enduring.

So, we broadened the ideal in Horace's *Odes*: Achievements need not be enduring, they may be ephemeral; and they need not be grand, they may be small. But some people may still find this wrong-headed. What is it, they object, with this focus on achievements and contributions, on making a mark, on making a difference?

John Keats contracted tuberculosis in his mid-twenties and realized that an early death was awaiting him. In one of the letters to his beloved Fannie Brawne, he reports an internal dialogue: '"If I should die," said I to myself, "I have left no immortal work behind me—nothing to make

my friends proud of my memory—but I have loved the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remembered."' Keats thought that he had achieved too little to leave a mark in the literary landscape due to his young age. But he found consolation in having lived his life in a particular mode—in accordance with an aesthetic principle.

Indeed, some find contentment not in achievements or contributions, but in having lived their lives in a particular way. They have lived their lives guided by an ideal of integrity, honesty, love, or service. They consider their lives worthwhile precisely because they lived in accordance with ideals that they subscribe to or identify with. Life was lived as it ought to be lived.

So, what makes life worthwhile retrospectively? Here is the landscape: There are modes of living, and there are achievements, both enduring and ephemeral, both grand and simple. People have different conceptions of what would make their lives worthwhile. There may be a match between their conception and the way they view their own lives. If so, then this will be a source of contentment. Or there may be a mismatch. They may have a bookshelf of influential tomes and yet feel that life was not lived well because they sense a lack of integrity. They may have a life of caring and service behind them and yet feel that nothing meant much because there is nothing of them that projects into the future.

What place is there for hope when it comes to our concern with life being worthwhile?

If one aims for enduring achievements, it is good to remember that the future is fickle and will be even more fickle in one's absence. Poets come and poets go as literary canons are rewritten. Family trees are unfolded with great interest only to end up in dusty attics (or archived websites), never to see the light of day again. There is always much room for doubt that our contribution will stand the test of time. And with doubt comes hope. We can at best hope that our lives were worthwhile; time shall be our judge.

When we are focused on the here and now, there is less room for doubt. The party our DJ threw was dope, and only a bore could deny it. Dickinson's robin was saved from the claws of the cat. But with any achievement, questions remain about our contribution as well as

about consequences. I remember a psychiatrist telling me a story about a patient, in his care, who overcame schizophrenia. At the end of the story, he looked at me and said: 'Did I do that? I don't know.' And, with each success, there are typically unforeseen consequences. For instance, the Gates Foundation reduced the incidence of malaria by dispensing malaria nets, but the nets are being used for fishing, polluting lakes, and depleting their fish. (The *Guardian*, 31 Jan. 2018)

Insofar as we strive to live life in a particular mode, we may have doubts because we are not fully transparent to ourselves. An artist may hope that they lived a life of aesthetic creation, but fear that they were a phony at heart. A philanthropist may hope that they were motivated by empathy, but fear that they were after fame and recognition. A politician may hope that they have lived a life of integrity, but fear that self-interest was often no less of a driving force.

No matter what we think a worthwhile life is all about, there is room for doubt. In the face of this doubt, modesty requires that we say, 'I hope that my life was worthwhile,' rather than, 'I know that my life was worthwhile.'

Dying well

The hope that one's life was worthwhile, that one has lived well, is mirrored in the hope that one will die well. What is it to die well? We all hope not to die a painful and agonizing death, but that's a problem for palliative care and pain management experts rather than philosophers. Aristotle has some views on dying well in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. (Book 3, Ch. 6) For him, dying on the battlefield is the noblest death—it is a proper ending to a happy life. But death caused by disease or death as a passenger on a sinking ship are unenviable deaths. Why does Aristotle think this?

On the battlefield one can courageously practice one's skills. This is desirable because we like to die in a way that reflects the ideals that we hold dear and the skills that we have honed over our lifetime. One can do no such thing when one battles disease or is a passenger on a sinking ship. Aristotle even makes an exception for a sailor—for a sailor, death at sea is a worthy death since a sailor can practice their skills trying to save the boat. Furthermore, we do not die in vain on the battlefield—our

death serves some greater cause. Considering modern warfare, dying on the battlefield is not what it used to be. But the message still stands. But the message still stands. We appreciate it if we can die in a way that reflects the way we lived, showing the ideals that have defined us. And we appreciate our deaths not to be in vain—we like them to serve some greater good.

When there is a fatal accident in sports, loved ones find consolation in assuring themselves that the athlete died doing what they liked doing best. A Muslim relative of mine faced protests from her family because she wanted to go on another Hajj—the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca—at an advanced age and in poor health. She responded: 'Could there be any sweeter way to leave this earth?' John Updike rested his head on the typewriter to gather the strength to type up his final poems on dying. (The *Guardian*, 11 March 2016) In all these cases, people died or faced death doing what they were good at, what they enjoyed, or what defined them throughout their lives. Loved ones find consolation in this.

People also hope to die in circumstances or at a time that reflects what they value in life or is symbolic of something they stand for or identify with. This can take many forms. They may hope to die surrounded by their families or in the comfort of their homes. They may hope to die, say, on Independence Day or a particular saint's day.

Mark Twain was born in the year of Halley's Comet and wrote that he hoped to die in the year of its return. He writes in 1909, the year before Halley's return, that it would be: 'the greatest disappointment of my life if I don't go out with Halley's Comet. The Almighty has said, no doubt: "Now here are these two unaccountable freaks; they came in together, they must go out together." Oh! I am looking forward to that.' (p. 1511) His hopes were met when he died in 1910 due to heart failure. Mark Twain was a great storyteller and dying in the year of the return of Halley's Comet was a way to give the world another story.

The comedian Tony Hancock joked: 'Does *Magna Carta* mean nothing to you? Did she die in vain?' Humor aside, revolutionaries indeed hope that their untimely deaths will advance the cause. Relatives of deceased soldiers find it very hard to accept that the war shouldn't have been fought. 'A woman protested, saying: "Of course it was a righteous war. My son fell in it,"' Kahlil Gibran writes in *Sand and Foam*.

Terminally ill patients participate in randomized controlled trials for experimental drugs and hope that their participation will contribute to the advancement of science. In all these cases, people would like their deaths to be good for something.

Aristotle's interest in dying well is also relevant to the contemporary debate on euthanasia. Proponents of euthanasia argue that patients should have the opportunity to die in a way that reflects what they stand for in life. If what they stand for are independence, control, and autonomy, they may consider euthanasia the most fitting death when they are afflicted by a debilitating disease. They do not want to see their bodies helplessly deteriorate further. They do not want to be dependent on a regimen of painkillers for pain control. They do not want to see themselves as being dependent on caregivers. They want to have control over their deaths as they have had control over their lives. Others live a life believing that some things should be left in the hands of God or should be determined by natural processes. They should have proper access to palliative care and be able to live through the natural dying process without having to endure excruciating pain.

Euthanasia is legal in many jurisdictions. Some people have asked for euthanasia wanting to be organ donors. They hope that their deaths will lead to some good by giving other people a new lease on life. They make substantial sacrifices. Cancer patients can only be organ donors if they opt for euthanasia early on during the progression of the disease, lest their organs be affected. And even for other patients, being an organ donor precludes choosing to die at home since organs can only be harvested in hospital surgery rooms.

And yet there is much resistance, and it is not easy to be an organ donor upon opting for euthanasia. There is the worry that unscrupulous medical providers will push patients to volunteer for euthanasia and organ donation. On the other hand, can we deny the terminally ill their last wish for their deaths to gain meaning through a life-affirming gift? Patients have one last hope—the hope that their sacrifices will make their deaths beneficial to others. Can one take this hope away from them?

Aristotle's enchantment with death on the battlefield seems quaint—a curiosity harking back to times when heroic values reigned. But his reasons are still instructive today. No less than the ancient Greek

warrior, we also hope to die well and meet our end through a death that reflects our lives or that is not in vain.

A Good Future

'*Après moi le déluge*' [After me the downfall]. These were the prescient words of Louis XV, which he uttered a few decades before his grandson, who was heir to the throne, was executed in the French Revolution. The phrase signals disinterest in a better future after one is dead and gone.

There is something disturbing about this. But what is meant by these four words? If we can figure this out, then we will gain a clearer sense of what is troubling about this phrase. And this will give us an insight into how it is that people really can have hopes for a future without them.

The phrase has a history. The earliest occurrence of a similar phrase is in an anonymous Greek fragment from a lost tragedy: 'When I die, let earth and fire mix: It matters not to me, for my affairs will be unaffected.' The line is echoed in Lucretius: 'Certainly then, when we do not exist, nothing at all will be able to affect us nor excite our senses, not even if the earth mixes with the sea, and the sea with the heavens.' Now it is true that events after our death won't affect our senses. But some events don't affect our senses, yet they do matter to us. If we judge our lives to be worthwhile based on enduring achievements, then the future does matter. And even if we don't, there are still other reasons to have hopes for things that won't affect our senses.

Here is an analogy. Suppose you are heading some top-secret unit in the military and are about to retire. Due to the nature of the unit, all contact will be broken off. This does not stop you from saying: 'I hope that the projects that I started come to fruition, I hope that the unit will succeed in its long-term mission, and I hope that my co-workers will do well, both professionally and in their personal lives.' That you will never know any of this does not stop you from hoping.

The same holds for death. We are invested in our families, our communities, and our projects. Suppose that a loved one is shortlisted for a prize, and the prizes will be awarded next year. I very much hope that they will win. I then receive a diagnosis of a terminal illness, and

it is certain that I will not be there to witness it. That does not stop me from hoping.

Seneca despises an attitude of indifference towards what happens after one's death and puts it in the same box as Nero's saying: 'Let them hate me, so long as they fear me.' The attitude signals a lack of concern for things that are outside the narrow circle of one's interests. What is objectionable is prioritizing one's interests at the expense of distant people or future people. Even though distant and future people may not pertain to one's interests, this is no reason not to care for them. And it is this hope for a world with less poverty or a future minimally affected by climate change that should guide our actions here and now.

The phrase can also be taken as a hope for posthumous calamities to occur rather than an expression of indifference about the future. Suppose that I am very much enjoying a party, but I must leave early. That hurts—and it is easier to take if I tell myself that the party is winding down. This may be mere wishful thinking. But it can also spill over in a kind of petty and shameful hope. I just can't stand the idea that the DJ will pick up the pace and that I will be missing out. What I hope to hear tomorrow is that the party was all but over, and that the venue closed a few minutes after I had left.

Toward the end of life, some people selectively focus their attention on unwelcome developments in society and the world at large. They become enamored by religious or secular doomsday scenarios. It is easier to go if the future is not worth living for, or if we all must go together anyway. This may be just a way to find consolation, but there is a fine line between consolation through selective focus and petty and shameful hopes.

We used the phrase '*Après moi le déluge*' and its history as a guide to uncover how it is that we have hopes for the future. First, some posthumous events do pertain to us, and hence we can hope for them. Second, minimally decent people do not restrict their cares to what pertains to them, but they also have hopes for distant and future people, and hence they can have hopes for them. And finally, reading the phrase as a wish for calamities to happen uncovers a shameful hope—the hope that the world will be a dismal place when it is our time to go.

Attitudes of Others

People hope that others will hold certain attitudes toward them when they are gone. They hope to be *missed*, *remembered*, and *respected*. There is some overlap between these categories. If one is missed, then one is remembered. The fallen in a war are not respected unless they are remembered. Nonetheless, these attitudes are different—for instance, one may be remembered without being either respected or missed. Each of these attitudes is in tension with some of the hopes that we have discussed earlier. We will take up each in turn.

Being missed. The hope to be missed by loved ones is a curious hope. Grief is a powerful emotion that can deeply mar one's life. 'Parting is all we know of heaven/ And all we need of hell,' writes Dickinson. Why would we hope for anything like this from our loved ones, especially considering that our hopes for the future typically include that they will do well?

Why would we want to be missed at all? When you leave a job, you may hope that the company will fall apart without you. This may play into your sense of self-importance. It may be a kind of revenge: You feel that you were not respected, and now they get what they deserve. But these are sad hopes, if not shameful hopes. Some such hopes may enter in at the end of life as well. I remember an obituary stating that it was the wish of the deceased that there be no meal after the funeral, since 'people have had plenty of time to come and have a meal with me; I would have been more than happy to oblige, but nobody ever came.' People feel slighted in life and hope that they will be missed in death—and preferably missed with guilt-laden grief.

But is there not a healthy way of hoping to be missed when one is no longer?

Being missed, one might say, is a sign of being loved. And we hope that we were loved. This is a good explanation when we are uncertain of being loved. But what if we are confident that we are being loved? Why hope for the smoke when we know that there is fire anyway?

Being missed, one might say, is part and parcel of being loved. And so, in hoping to be missed, we are not hoping for a sign of being loved—we are simply hoping to be loved. But we don't need to hope for everything

that is part and parcel of the things we hope for. World travelers hope for pristine beaches, breath-taking sights, and novel experiences, but not for the long plane rides to get to them.

But this, one might object, is an unfair comparison. Being missed is essential to being loved, but long plane rides are not essential to world travel: Elon Musk's Big Falcon Rocket could get us anywhere on earth in less than an hour. Fair enough. But then think of parenting. Hardships are essential to parenting: There is no parenting without hardships. Prospective parents hope for the joys of parenting, but not for the hardships that are part of it. So why then, in hoping to be loved, would we need to hope to be missed?

Furthermore, being missed need not even be a sure-proof sign of being loved or part and parcel of being loved. People love in different ways, and they love different people in different ways. Grief after loss need not be a measure of the love that once was. There is love that can let go and that barely grieves. There is intense grief, not because of love for the deceased, but because it is intermingled with many other more and less healthy emotions.

So, then what should we hope for? There is much wisdom in Christina Rossetti's poem 'Song': 'When I am dead, my dearest,/ Sing no sad songs for me;/ Plant thou no roses at my head,/ Nor shady cypress tree:/ Be the green grass above me/ With showers and dewdrops wet;/ And if thou wilt, remember,/ And if thou wilt, forget.' Rossetti asks that there be no expressions of grief from a loved one upon her death. But she hopes that a loved one will be like the grass on her grave—keeping a connection but standing strong and directed toward the world. Whether this is enhanced by missing her or not is of no import. The most we should hope for is that some connection remains, which can find expression in a feeling of absence, but this feeling should be a feeling that enriches life.

Being remembered. The hope to be remembered is close to the hope to make an enduring contribution. But it's not the same thing. Here are a few questions to ponder.

Both Alfred Russell Wallace and Charles Darwin came up with the core ideas of the theory of evolution at roughly the same time. Now suppose Wallace's work did more for the theory of evolution than

Darwin's work. However, Darwin is certainly remembered more than Wallace. Would you prefer to be Wallace or Darwin?

Suppose that you are William Shakespeare on his death bed. A genie in a bottle gives you a choice. Either all your work will remain preserved for posterity, but the identity of the author will be forgotten, and each of the plays will be signed with 'Anonymous.' Call this Shakespeare Anonymized. Or, half of your works will be preserved with your name properly attached to them, while the others will be lost forever. Or, to make it harder, suppose that 90 percent will be so preserved. Call this Shakespeare Redux. What would you choose?

If you only hope that your life is worthwhile on grounds of having made enduring contributions, then you should choose to be Wallace, and you should choose to be Shakespeare Anonymized. If you choose to be Darwin or Shakespeare Redux, you also hope that *you* will be remembered, over and above the hope of having made an enduring contribution.

Why would one want to be remembered? We may think of ourselves as getting a kind of lease on life when our names live on in people's minds and continue to be mentioned in conversations and written work. There is something very odd about this sentiment though. Woody Allen appropriately mocks it: 'I do not want to achieve immortality through my work; I want to achieve immortality by not dying. I don't want to live on in the hearts of my countrymen; I want to live on in my apartment.' (Woody Allen and Linda Sunshine, *Illustrated Woody Allen Reader.*)

Presumably, we don't just want to be remembered, we want to be remembered well, just as we want people to think well of us during our lives. What good does being thought well of do? It matters during one's life because people will trust you and this provides for opportunities. But being remembered after one's death does not offer any such benefits. It matters to be thought of well because it provides some limited evidence that one's contributions are worthwhile. Sure, but why not just hope that one's contributions are worthwhile? There is no point in hoping for smoke when you can hope for fire.

So, we need to give a different answer. Many people value being thought of well in itself. It is not of value because it provides opportunities or because it provides evidence. It is of value for what it is and that's

that. It is reasonable to think that being remembered posthumously has the same appeal.

And so, a desire to be thought of well posthumously might make one hope to be Darwin rather than Wallace, and Shakespeare Redux rather than Shakespeare Anonymized. It wouldn't be my choice, but it is not a crazy choice.

Being respected. Diogenes asked that his corpse be set out to be devoured by wild animals. Jeremy Bentham's dressed-up skeleton with a wax head is put on display in the UCL (University College London) student center. King's College students stole the actual head in 1975 (and returned it), and there is a legend that it was used for an impromptu game of football (or, for American readers, soccer.)

Most people are not like Diogenes. Neither would they like to see their heads used as footballs. They hope that their bodies, bones, or gravesites will be treated with respect after being gone. We are horrified when we hear reports of the corpses of US soldiers being dragged through Mogadishu, severed heads being displayed by ISIS, people urinating on graves, or Jewish graveyards being desecrated with swastikas.

There is an interesting tension at the heart of photojournalism that flares up regularly. It is an unwritten rule that there should be no frontal shots of corpses out of respect for the deceased and their loved ones. But the picture showing a frontal shot is often so powerful that it has the potential to bring about social change. Larry Burrows, a photojournalist who was killed in Vietnam, agonized about publishing shocking war images. He worried that he would be 'simply capitalizing on other men's grief.' But he gave himself permission because his images 'would penetrate the hearts at home of those who are simply too indifferent.'

Emmett Till, a Black fourteen-year-old boy from Chicago, was visiting relatives in Mississippi in the summer of 1955. He allegedly wolf-whistled a white woman in a store and was tortured and brutally killed by the woman's husband and half-brother. His mother asked for an open casket and called *Jet* magazine to run pictures of the boy's disfigured body to show the world what had been done to her son. These pictures shocked the world and galvanized the civil rights movement.

More recently, the picture of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler whose corpse was washed ashore on 2 September 2015 in Turkey, was a case

in point. There were two pictures—one in which he is washed up on the beach with his face toward the camera and one in which he is being carried away by an aid worker with his face hidden. (The *Guardian*, 2 Sep. 2015) Newspapers were split on which picture they should publish. Some refused to publish the frontal shot out of respect for the little boy and his family. Still, it was precisely this picture that affected public opinion and made a difference to worldwide refugee policy.

Alan Kurdi was just a toddler, which complicates the moral calculus. But if the image is an image of adults who lost their lives in tragic ways, there is a tension between the presumed hope of the deceased that one will be respected in death and the hope that one's death will not be in vain, that is, that one's death will raise awareness and effect positive change. How this tension is resolved will be different dependent on the wishes, presumed or actual, of the deceased and on the particulars of the case.

Summing up, we have hopes that others will bear certain attitudes toward us when we are no more. Hoping to be missed stands in tension with the hopes that our loved ones' lives will not be marred by grief. Hoping to be remembered is subtly distinct from hoping for a worthwhile life on grounds of having made enduring achievements. And there is an interesting tension between meeting the deceased's hope to be respected in death and the hope that one's death may lead to some good.