

THE LIVING DEAD MAN

"That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true, 'tis pity;

And pity 'tis, 'tis true." — William Shakespeare

Did I say living dead? Yes, such things actually exist. This modern world is far too much for me when men look straight at you and declare and firmly believe they are dead. This is the type of thing that occurs only in mental hospitals.

There's never a dull moment when working with mental patients. Each one lives in his own little world and has his own thoughts. He may be Julius Caesar, Louis XIV, or even Napoleon, but the most peculiar one that I have met yet is a little gentleman about five feet four inches tall, weighing 115 pounds, and very spoo-shouldered from his many years of standing in the one and only corner of the building so far as he is concerned.

This little man, better known as "Dead Man", stands in his corner twelve hours each day. He has no worries except for the fact he is dead. When asked by the attendant to arise and dress, the little man's answer is always firm and brief. "A dead man can't get up," followed by his three word sentence: "Aw-w man dead." After much persuasion by the attendant, the dead man arises, dresses, and resumes his place in the corner. He continues to argue he is dead and is sometimes honest enough to confess he is in hell.

Days, weeks, months, and even years pass and the dead man stands in his corner, constantly repeating, "Man dead, man dead." The only successful way I've found in getting the dead man to talk is to take the negative side of his statement. Then the dead man tries to prove his point by saying, "I know I am dead, ain't got no feeling; see my hand?" He then extends a bony, rheumatic-like hand as though that were proof that he is dead. He occasionally opens his mouth saying he has no teeth, which he thinks is another indication of death.

His corner answers the purpose of bathroom, sitting room, and lounge combined. The only time he volunteers to leave his corner is for his three meals, and to go to bed. He declares he isn't hungry and doesn't want a thing to eat, but after going to the table he suddenly changes his mind. He eats not only his share of food, but also the food from the plates of the fellows that sit near him.

The dead man must be forced from his corner for his weekly bath and shave. On these two occasions the dead man becomes panicky and can see no reason in shaving and bathing a dead man. He is allergic to water and the very sight of a razor and shaving mug excites him. If all dead people had these reactions, I'm afraid there would be a greater demand for undertakers.

Just how long this corpse has been dead no one knows. Not even he remembers just when he died. So far as he is concerned, he is dead and that is all that matters. Although he has a normal temperature, pulse, and respiration, I challenge any psychiatrist to make him believe he isn't dead.

— Henry Jones

DEDICATION: MARCH WHITE COAT

We dedicate this issue of our paper to those whose misfortune it has been to suffer mental illness.

From the demon-ridden Legions of antiquity to the case histories of today;

From those who stare into dumb space to those who are far smarter than you and me;

From Rousseau and Nietzsche to Mr. J and Miss L;

From the mercy killings of Nazism to the attempted rehabilitation in our more civilized cultures.

To these we dedicate our paper.

C.P.S. Unit #74

Eastern Shore State Hospital

Cambridge

Maryland

To Mrs. Schuman

Mennonite Central Committee

Abingdon, Penna.

With Best
Wishes from

— Carl — Rust

