

After Death - a Xmas Gothic by David Bradley

"How does it go, again?"

"Bad fly boss walk jam nitty gritty"

"You're listening to the boy"

Together: "from the big bad city"

"That's it, yeah, that's it, I remember."

"Jaaam hot, this is jaaam hot"

"Shhh...have some respect."

"Sorry, yes that's it...sheesh, they don't write them like that any more. You can barely make out the words in that awful stuff the kids listen to now."

"Yeah, 'granddad', when did you get all 'old folk's home, you're only 136, got your whole life ahead of you!"

"Hah, whole life, that's funny...I remember when 100-years old became the new three score year and ten"

"Seems like only yesterday"

"Well, it wasn't it, it was the year 2073, when they worked out that gene edit wasn't it? When they reset the years to AM and started counting from 1 again"

"Yeah it was...funny, I'd just turned 13 when that song was recorded, it was class, annoyed the hell out of my parents, rest their souls".

"13? And the rest!"

"Well, okay, I forget, it gets hard working backwards with these new dates and age really makes no difference these days, does it?"

"Yeah, 'granddad', like I say you're still heading for the old folks home."

"If you can get a place, even the multi-undergrounders are stuffed full."

"Yeah, sometimes I think back to when they were almost empty, I used to work in one of the original sites, doling out the vaccine, I must have told you that before."

"Yes, yes, a million times. Vaccine was never the right word though, was it? It wasn't a stimulus for your immune system to fight a disease, after all. It was something altogether different."

"True, true."

"I still don't get why we say AM though...ante mortem...doesn't that mean 'before death', we're living in a world that's after death, so it should be AD."

"Yes, but back then AD had religious overtones, didn't it Anno Domini, year of Our Lord? Allelujah, Jeebers saves and all that?"

"Yes, no need for religion now, but I suppose labeling the years PM, for post mortem, comes with its own baggage and it's not like we're living 'after death', we're just, you know, living without it."

"Indeed we are, hence all those multi-undergrounders, and all those people with so much time and so little to do with it..."

"It's quite sad, really"

"Which is why we're gathered here today, isn't it? Not everyone wants to be 'vaccinated' or 'edited', or whatever you want to call it. It's not like you stop getting old."

"No."

"No."

"Cracking tune though."

"Aye, a banger, as we used to say, haha."

"Interesting choice...oh the curtains are closing."

"This is jam hot, this is jam hot, haha."

"Shhhh...have some respect for the dead, would you? And it's not 'bad fly boss' it's 'tank fly boss'."