

## Tears

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The ancient Greek aphorism "Know Thyself" crept into my world at an early age.  
In this tenth decade I'm still getting to now me. What I know, I like.

As a child I could and did cry an ocean of tears. About anything, everything.

Then one day, for reasons unrealized even today, still a child, tears ceased.

That earlier child had this thought; tears improved eyesight, washed impurities that lessened sight. Then, when I got something in my eye, it required water to wash out the irritant. Tears helped. Our family, all others to memory, had an "eye cup", deep-blue glass. This was filled with some gentle mix, often just water, and the cup, held to either eye, head back, open the eyelid, swish around the mix, presto, cure the ailment. Mom and her ilk, keep their brood clear eyed at any sign of harm to the eye.

That cup now a memory, family Museum piece, from the heyday of the Coolidge administration.

Since then I have not cried at any loss or triumph. An unexplained change.

I do care for my eyes. With face cloth, eyes shut, I lightly scrub the whole area of the eyelash, puling down to remove any 'crud' the eye lid may have removed from the eye's surface. Love to swim, and underwater, open eyes, glimpse that wonder world pass as the body moves, eyes never irritated by chlorine or sludge left by other bodies.

Earlier in life, the warm shallows of the South Pacific, unbelievable sights.

Still emotion surrounding loss never changed. Failure to cry reached my consciousness when I was 20. A cousin, six years younger, was killed in an accident. At the funeral parlor, preparations and funeral, mine the only dry eye. And this was a cousin I really admired. He was tall, red-headed, freckled, always smiling, would be the most natural humorists I would ever meet, dead at fourteen.

I can see him smile today, eighty years later,  
could not cry then, or now, at our loss.

That truly a great loss. And I could not even pinch myself to cry.  
His mother, my Aunt didn't understand either.

Yes, I know the world cries at the drop of a hat. Or even less trivial moments.  
Seeing others cry, can cause strangers to get their handkerchief ready.

That is not my lot.

To me death himself seems to enjoy seeing humans cry. Well, to him I say,  
"Death, my friend, You'll not see me crying now or when face to face."

Toil and tears, the lot of mankind. In every life, plenty of toil.  
Still, while indifferent to a failure to shed tears, I do feel loss.

For many years now, especially with those close to me in friendship or relation,  
yet dwelling far away, on any parting, I have made it clear they understand each  
Good-Bye, may be our final adieu. That we both understood. Add meaning to the  
word itself, a contraction of the older farewell "God Be With You" which through  
corruption became Good-bye.

For, in every case, I the survivor, was unable to attend their final farewell.  
To tell others the intermingling of our lives had been a joy, a long trial, trail,  
and that what was shared in all past moments was enclosed in that last  
"Good-Bye".

I trust each understood.

Now all dead, in lands far from Denver  
and my well wishes at that final gathering,  
my last and silent  
Good-Bye.