

Home

An angel atop a Christmas tree
An angel upon my shoulder
An angel standing behind me
Giving life's last, and death's first order¹

A child asleep in her crib
Rosy cheeks, quivering smile
Wonderful dreams play in her head
As she rests from life for awhile²

I look down upon the lovely child
Her smile becomes my own
I wonder what all her life will inspire
I long for the future to be shown³

I close my eyes and rest from life as well
A dream begins to play within my mind
It's filled with the millions of kisses I'll miss
It's filled with all our lost time⁴

I rise from the chair to place one final kiss
Only to find that my flesh is not there
The child's cheeks and my groans both pass through my lips
As I look back and see me in the chair⁵

I rise with the angel, destroyer of life and of dreams
To a home that I've longed for, but have never seen
Leaving behind all I've loved and all I have known
Hoping that one day you'll wake, and be with me – at home⁶

¹ One of my favorite things is when Elin goes to sleep and wakes up. I love how peaceful she is (especially compared to the rest of the day). At the end of the day, it allows for relaxation and reflection, and at the beginning of the day she is so sweet and the moment is filled with hope for the day. As I've put her down over the past few weeks – around Christmas – I've reflected on a number of stories in the news about parents who die or are dying, that hit home more now that I have kids. I imagine what it would be like if I die. It kills me, but it especially kills me to think about dying without getting to say goodbye. While cancer and other long term illnesses allow for some sort of goodbye, it would be so painful to just die suddenly. In this poem, it's Christmas time and the angel of death has arrived.

² While Elin doesn't do this any more, when Atticus sleeps, his mouth will often quiver into a smile and you can tell he's dreaming.

³ One of the hardest things to think about is not only saying goodbye, but knowing you won't be around for so many events and special moments (graduation, firsts, marriage, etc).

⁴ Whereas the closing of the child's eyes was sleep, for me here, it's used to indicate death. As I slip into death, I think of all I'm going to miss with her.

⁵ When I go to say goodbye, I can't, as my spirit leaves no impression upon her flesh, and the words my "lips" utter cannot be heard.

⁶ Here I sort of reverse the sad idea. While I say the angel destroys life and dreams, he takes me to a home I've longed for. While he takes me away from what I've loved and what I've known, he takes me to a place where I've always been known – he takes me home. While it was difficult leaving behind my love and familiarity, at the same time, my departure from life's dream leaves me finally awake. And one day, I hope that you will be finally home with me as well. Saying all this, I do not mean to imply the gnostic notion that this life and our physical bodies are bad. It's just that in comparison to all things made right, this life is incomplete and not what reality should be.

