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## Triumph of Death

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# Triumph of Death

**Keywords**

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**Author Bio**

Kriscinda Meadows is a junior English major, concentrating on the Gothic, with a Writing minor. She gave her first paper at Oxford on the zombie genre audience, and her second in Boston regarding HP Lovecraft's "Reanimator" stories and Burke's sublime aesthetic. This last year also saw the publication of her short horror story, "Wall-eyed" in the *The Undead: Flesh Feast*, a zombie anthology. Currently, she is studying in Bath, England and filling the gaps in her knowledge of 19th century Gothic. She usually lives in Gettysburg, with her partner, Peter, and their Spook.

## Triumph of Death

It seemed to happen all at once.  
Moments ago the joker laughed  
over a game of backgammon,  
to the strings strummed on a lyre.  
Though he knew it would come,  
for you, for him, for everyone.

He scurries beneath a large table  
once adorned with fruits and feasts,  
of greens and of beasts, of desserts,  
of delicacies, too delicate for this.  
The crimson checks upon your back  
won't keep you from this foul attack.

Set once in stately perfection, the table  
now tilted, cups crooked, plates askew—  
provisions putrefy beneath afflicting air,  
rotting on regal china, spilling and staining.  
A belly barren which once was full,  
his eyes like fire, his mouth like wool.

They've come to caress and spread  
their scrawny limbs about him, and  
his King—to let him see the time slip  
as does his breath, and his wealth.  
Between their bony fingers fall,  
the tithes and taxes of them all.

Black birds ride haggard horses  
collecting the heads of the dead and  
grinding bodies beneath wagon wheels.  
Murdered monks sing matins, and mourn.  
And in the bog the bodies float,  
while ghastly grins ruthlessly gloat.

The horizon heaves with smoky billows  
blowing up and away from a ruined land,  
spotted with gallows and guillotines,  
ravaged by ranks of choking change.

They ring the bells with wasted grip,  
on ropes to hang, 'round necks to slip.

The fool glances back over his shoulder—  
the blur of bedlam, drawn swords and  
futile attempts at flimsy defenses—  
for one last look before he loses himself  
beneath this table cloth, to hold his knees,  
to shut his eyes, to clench his teeth, and  
to tremble, and trust that what plagues the rest  
will not touch him, with their gaunt digits.

It comes in the air—and seeds to fester;  
it comes for all, sovereign to jester.