

Essay/Personal Reflection

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I read obituaries, I read them every day (Breitbart, 2021). I am intrigued by the narrative of the stories and the lives revealed, some true, some a bit embellished. A few are loquacious, particularly those of celebrities. Yet, I am uncertain why I read them. Perhaps as a voyeur glancing from afar, perhaps as a measure of my own life, or perhaps as a glimpse of my own mortality. Or perhaps all three. When I read, I notice the ages. Typically, they tend toward the latter part of life, the 70s, 80s, and 90s, with a smattering of the 100s. But during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ages varied, with the 40s, 50s, and 60s more frequent. The number of newspaper pages devoted to obituaries also increased, often exceeding 10–20, particularly in urban locales. Several newspapers even instituted “Those lost to COVID-19” sections. But with the arrival of vaccines and the clamor for immunization, the number of deaths and obituaries declined. However, the respite was temporary. The rise of the Delta variant fomented a surge of deaths to near peak-pandemic levels. Yet, as before, the numbers are again declining. Still, I read obituaries, I read them every day (Breitbart, 2021).

Conflict of interest. I have no conflicts of interest.

Reference

Breitbart W (2021) A COVID-19 obituary. *Journal of Palliative Supportive Care* **19**(1), 1–2.