

COLLECTANEA

As a collector of many things myself, it is my privilege to introduce *Folklore Forum's* new section "Collectanea." In this section we seek to present the very stuff of folklore itself; to draw in what Richard Dorson might have referred to as "A good haul of folklore." Why create such a space? I certainly hope that our hearts will always hold a place for the text, as unruly, naked, and controversial as it can be. How many of us find ourselves in Folklore because of a collection of Grimms' tales owned in childhood? Or a song sung by a family member or friend? It was the text that first inspired me. It cracked open a window and allowed me to breathe an air soaked in wonder and heavy with sawdust, stepmothers, and the scents of cooking. I see no reason to turn our backs on it. For certain, we must never ignore the enormous contribution of contextualist studies and the role of the performance—just as folklore changed my way of seeing the world, these approaches changed the way we see folklore. But why not, for a little while at least, allow ourselves the guilty pleasure of textual indulgence?

In this space we hope to celebrate the text—both its possibilities and its limitations. We encourage you to share with us. Possible submissions include tales, jokes, music, recipes, floor plans and photographs of people, materials, and events, to name but a few. Of particular interest are items relevant to special issues of the journal.

In this issue we present a few items relevant to our theme of death and burial. David Shayt brings us two photographs of materials intimately tied to the Jewish experience of death—the traditional coffin constructed of wood, and the special knives designated for kosher slaughter. When he offered us the photographs for consideration, we found ourselves forced to reflect on the relevance of the knives to our theme. This brought up an interesting point: in formulating the framework of this special issue, we never considered the role of animal death. We include the image here in an effort to address this significant oversight.

As Kurt mentions in his "Open Forum" contribution, there is a profound cultural silence surrounding death. This reluctance to confront death openly has in no way discouraged, and some have argued only encouraged, the explosion of jokes that follows a public tragedy. In the past year, the deaths of Mother Teresa, Princess Diana, Michael Kennedy, and Sonny Bono provided yet more grist for the cultural joke mill. We could not resist including a selection of these products. Culled exclusively from Internet sources, we present these jokes here to offer another side of the cultural dialogue on death.

Andy Kolovos