chapter, "Numbering," details the intensity and significance of the bureaucracy that developed to provide a final accounting of the Civil War dead. The epilogue, "Surviving," lists some of the mysteries that linger into the present day: who were the Civil War dead (nearly half) who remain undocumented? What was the role of God in that war; in any war? What does it mean for a nation to survive such a trial by fire? The Civil War "introduced a level of carnage that foreshadowed the wars of the century to come," and new ways of managing death were institutionalized in its aftermath. But, Faust concludes, "we still struggle to understand how to preserve our humanity and our selves in such a world" (271).

Even historians specializing in this period will learn a great deal about the Civil War from *This Republic of Suffering*. Far more important and wide-reaching, however, are Faust's contributions to a more general understanding of the pain and suffering inherent in all wars, of how people learn to kill, to die, to mourn, and to grapple with devastating loss on a personal and national scale. This is a soul-searching book, richly illustrated with disturbing photographs, and one that asks important questions about the nature of war, memory, sacrifice, mourning, life…and death.

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Guilt, Fear of the Dead, and Burial

Guilt and Frustration in Facing Death in My Family

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At long intervals in my adult life, my relatives, including grandparents and parents, passed away and again I was not there for their dying. Rarely did I have the means to attend memorial services. For the most part, therefore, this whole experience in life has passed me by. If it were not for the efficiency and cheapness of long-distance telephones over the past quarter of a century, this alienation and loneliness that I feel would have been more so. What do you do when you are not part of the community around you and have so few friends you can count them on the fingers of one hand?

When my mother died at only age fifty-four, she had gone in to the hospital for open-heart surgery and she begged me not to come to New York from Winnipeg until she was back home. She had a stroke while under the knife and never woke up, though she did phone the night before she had her operation to tell me, with her usual wit, that she was going to the moon, just like the astronauts. When I received the phone call to fly home at once because she would not likely last the next few hours, I arrived to find the doctors speaking of an indeterminate time before she awoke or passed away. After several days, everyone urged me to go back to Canada and to work, as there was no point in staying. I flew back to my wife and children, and when I landed was told my mother had died and to go to New York at once.

For my father's death, not only was I not there when he left this life, I also missed both his funerals. The phone call came as something of a surprise; his death at seventy-two was not expected. I tore my shirt, went into the garden and threw dirt on my head, and wept, all automatically it seems, all the old customs appearing out of ancient memories. But in the next phone call, I said it was probably best to wait a week to fly back to New York because then I could stay almost a month and that it would be good to be with relatives and grieve with them rather than have to come back to Singapore after only a day or two. So I missed both the funeral he had the next day in Florida, where he had retired, and the second memorial service in Brooklyn for those old friends and cousins who were too elderly to get to Deerfield Beach—and so he could be buried next to my

mother on Long Island. When I did get to America, none of my relatives could accept my excuses for not being there, and so I too have had to live with that guilt.

Sometimes the death notices have been more grotesque. On one of the few times my wife and I could take a few days holiday by the seashore, we returned home to find a series of messages on the telephone answering machine. Each became more insistent that we should call up because an uncle had died, and then the voices reported that his sister had died a day later, and so by the time I could call the family in New York both of my father's siblings were gone, the funerals had taken place, and, aside from one elderly aunt, who was showing acute signs of Alzheimer's, I was the oldest surviving member of the family. More guilt.

With my wife's family and with friends, the end has come before we could prepare, and the funerals arranged and conducted without our being able to afford either the money or the time for the long twenty-seven to thirty-two hour flights. My wife did, however, fly to her mother's funeral four times: three times after she received word that the end was nigh but by the time she got to Arizona there was a recovery, and the fourth time she arrived after her parent passed away and so at least made the funeral.

What does it mean to be cut off and to be burdened with ever-increasing guilt for not being there for the ordeal of dying or of grieving with loved ones and old friends? To a great extent, it makes death a horrible event. Not because I am afraid of my own demise. In fact, I have been to the brink and back several times, with cancer and heart disease. No, the fearful thing is the thought of how others will respond, meaning my wife, my children, my granddaughter and—I don't think there will be others as I discovered when I had a year off from teaching when I had a cancer that was supposed to kill me within nine weeks. Only one colleague sheepishly appeared at the door to deliver some mail when I returned to the university: "they" looked at me in surprise and said, "But you're supposed to be dead!"

That is why the idea of a public show at the deathbed with a fine speech of advice or an ethical will with its sage counsel are so absurd and yet so fascinating. These scenes stand in the place of the great silence, and the emotional pain and financial costs for those who have to go through the ordeal of arranging the care for the body, the funeral, and all the rest that goes with an orderly departure from civil society. You just can not ask someone to get a nice cheap black rubbish sack, put you in it, and toss it on the rubbish heap.

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The Importance of Mourning and Burial

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Mourning and burial deal with the denial of the loss of self and the powerless sensation that accompanies it. They are parts of the psychohistory of mankind's response to death with an early childhood psychodynamic determinant. Mourning is a very special and reasonable process. Someone who has been loved is someone with whom we have identified. Psychologically they are in some ways a part of us. Mourning is about giving up a part of oneself while still remaining intact. When mourning is completed, then there is return to a full life. Remembrances of the deceased—anniversaries of their death, pictures, mementos, gravesites, and so forth—are a means of making the bereaved feel more intact.

Some of the world's greatest human constructions, such as the pyramids, attest to the importance of burial and the afterlife in all cultures. The collection of valuables to be interred with the properly prepared body, the slaughter of humans and animals to accompany the individual into their afterlife, and the extensive religious activities and liturgy involving so much of the living prove the "vital" importance of this activity.