

Bring Out Your Dead. Bring Out Your Dead. Bring Out Yo . . . Aw, The Hell With It.

by John M. Joyce



Ring-a-ring o' roses,
A pocket full of posies,
A-tishoo! A-tishoo!
We all fall down.¹

Each to their own, each to their own, but must I and my mate

cover behind our double glazing? Should we gaze out fearfully at the empty lane with its haphazard trimming of tardy snowdrops and blithe Lent lilies that quiver under the zephyr's sigh as it slides through the green-shadowed sticks of awakening thorn above them?

Death strolls breezily between the hedgerows, haunts the holloways and courses the beaten paths. Invisible killers slay on his whimsical command.

Stay at home! Don't go out! Keep away from other people! Fear! Whatever else you do – fear!

The beast must be fed. Pestilence knows no race, only hunger. Death knows no prejudice, we will all die together.

Oh my dear, my darling, come away from the window, come away lest it sees you and worms its way between the glassy molecules.

The holy men know there are no cosy coffins; they hide from the scythe too. Our world has gone to hell – without benefit of clergy.

Will the darkness ever end?
Will this curse ever be lifted?
Will the slop of our miserable lives
ever be washed clean?
No one knows
but God above.
Save us.²

Will I too go gentle into this good night?³

No! Never! I will NOT.

Pass me that bottle! Bring in my friends! There is time yet for one last party, one last dance with the devil.

Each to their own, but I will not skulk and whimper in the sham shelter of my kennel, whipped and beaten by the Horsemen like a cringing cur.

Told what to do by politicians! Politicians pandering to the new puritans who want to suck the joy out of even death itself.

You have got to be kidding me!

If I must die I will die defiant with two fingers up to those who lie that they can save us if only we'll do as we're told.

If that's the price for being saved I want none of it!

I'm with the half-term generation 'Z'immers – party like there's no tomorrow.

If you're lucky there won't be.

Footnotes:

1 – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring_a_Ring_o%27_Roses

2 – Matthew Henning,
<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-black-death-3/>

3 – Dylan Thomas,
<https://poets.org/poem/do-not-go-gentle-good-night>