

The Ouija Board Guide to True Facts about Cremation

by Larry Strattner

Holy catsalodies, 1800 degrees is fucking hot! I thought I died and went to Hell. Turns out it was only for a little more than two hours. Damn! Good thing though it wasn't Hell. Only the oven. I signed up for the damn thing, I have to admit.

The good news is the bullshit you hear about your spirit being separate from your body is true. If 1800 degrees won't make your assbone stick to your spirit like a fatty piece of pork to an iron skillet I don't know what will. The fire is a bit disorienting. Those incredible flames all close together can make you lose your bearings. They throw you right in them too. No pussyfooting around. Boom! You're in there and they turn up the jets.

Foom! That's the sound the fire makes when it goes up, Foom! I burned my eyebrows off at the charcoal grill once. Up till now that was my biggest Foom!

When you buy the farm you find yourself up above yourself looking down or off to the side looking over. It seemed like I'd heard that story and it was true. The fire though is weird because you're not looking at someone you've seen in the mirror shaving. You're looking at a pile of ashes and bone fragments. Who knows who the fuck it was? It might have been you. You're pretty sure it was because you're in the oven with it. But then again you are now, as they say, "without portfolio." Proof it was you is up the chimney with your 55 to 78 percent water content. You get to follow you out when they shovel you and then sift and run a magnet over you to pull any

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metal out then put you through the mulcher (they call it “processing” but it's a fucking mulcher) to get you down to urn-particle size. Depending upon who shows up to pick up the urn you might get more comfortable it really was you in there.

The part that pissed me off and I had no idea it would be a problem, is like almost any change the change from a smelly gas bag to a graceful waft of pure being takes some time to get used to. If you choose the mahogany box six feet under you get time. If you chose the blast furnace it's, Whoa! You are the new thing instantaneously! It's like winning the fucking Lottery and remember Cindy Lauper said, “Money changes everything.” Think about it. It's an apt metaphor.

It's a goddamn good thing the law only lets them burn one of us at a time. Otherwise who knows how tangled up we'd get there in the furnace, what with the change, the discombobulation and all the parts and pieces of who everybody was flying around. The law says you must be put in a “casket or other container” and you've got to watch words like “other.” I was suspicious about that “other” thing. I used to play cards with a mortician and he's a guy who would put you in a plastic garbage can and charge for mahogany. At least he didn't preheat my oven. I don't deserve much, but thank god for that.

I hung out with a guy later whose pacemaker, artificial knees and shoulder all exploded in the fire. He said it was a hoot. His goddamn wife was supposed to tell them he had that shit but she never did give a rat's ass about him and didn't tell them. One of the balls from his knee joint went right through the oven wall. That must have caused a scramble! Oh, and take off all your jewelry unless you want your relatives sifting you through a window screen looking for your diamond.

I, at the time thinking I was of sound mind and body, bought my own urn. You may or may not want to buy your own urn. If you plan for someone to keep your entire person-pile you may want the cremation dudes to pick an urn, else wise you risk a Danny DeVito vs. Refrigerator Perry mistake when you are poured which I will not elaborate upon.

If you do not plan to have your entire person-pile kept but only a portion, or remembrance-pile, I don't really know how anyone can make a decision where to spoon out a selection of you. Think about it. There could be an urn on the mantle with only the ashes of your ass in it. While that might be amusing at times you might also consider what other undesirable portions of yourself might find their way into the urn. Yeech!

Personally I'm not much for cemeteries. But rather than have my left-over-pile thrown off the George Washington Bridge after my remembrance-pile was urned I opted to have it put in a cemetery. I heard my brother Sammy remark it was the perfect opportunity to put "flaming asshole" on the little bronze plate. My guess he'll get to see two fires one right after the other when his time comes.

Anyway, it's important to put your some of your ashes in an accessible spot. I was going to have them dumped in the backyard but then sure as shit my wife would sell the house and some strange dog would be taking a dump on me every day. I had enough of that when I was still connected all together.

So I hope this message helps. I know it's a lot from a Ouija board but believe me there are things here you're better off knowing before the Foom! than after. Thanks for twisting the planchette. Even now someone is loading your briquettes.

