



Philosophy and Death: Introductory Readings

Robert J. Stainton, Samantha Brennan

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Philosophical reflection on death dates back to ancient times, but death remains a most profound and puzzling topic. Samantha Brennan and Robert Stainton have assembled a compelling selection of core readings from the philosophical literature on death. The views of ancient writers such as Plato, Epicurus, and Lucretius are set alongside the work of contemporary figures such as Thomas Nagel, John Perry, and Judith Jarvis Thomson.

Brennan and Stainton divide the anthology into three parts. Part I considers questions about the nature of death and our knowledge of it. What does it mean to be dead? Is it possible to survive death? Is the end of life a mystery? Part II asks how we should view death. What (if anything) is so bad about dying? If death is nothingness, should it be feared or regretted? Part III examines ethical questions related to killing, particularly abortion, euthanasia and suicide. Is killing ever permissible? Under what conditions or circumstances?

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