

Call for Papers
Till Death Do Us Part: Essays on Dying

Editor: Margot R. Challborn

Publisher: under consideration by University of Regina Press, [The Exquisite Corpse](#) book series

Primary subject areas: Health, Medicine, and Mental Health; Law and Justice Studies; Politics and Public Policy; and Social Justice and Activism.

Expected: 2028

Timeline:

February 29, 2025 —Deadline for abstracts (300 words maximum), please include a brief CV

March 30, 2025— Notification of accepted proposal

August 31, 2025— Deadline for submission of chapter drafts (6,000-8,000 words, including notes and citations)

January 2028— Tentative publication deadline for the project

Follow *Chicago Manual of Style*, 18th edition and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* for spelling and usage.

Contact: Correspondence and submissions to be sent to: mchallborn@torontomu.ca

The assumption that we will survive into old age (a time when we assume most people will die a “natural death”) and be provided (by loved ones or social services) with the types of life affirming care and sustenance that each of us needs is not often born out. This became especially apparent during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, when public safety measures forced many to watch their loved ones die in isolation. This is also evident in Canada’s persistent role as an agent of death in its genocidal occupation and dispossession of Indigenous lands, failures to engage in even the most basic forms of “reconciliation” (despite the launch of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission over a decade ago), persistent dismissal of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, men, and boys, the refusal to acknowledge the hundreds of unmarked children’s graves, and the ongoing violence of forced sterilization of bodies marginalized by systems of racism, classism, ableism, and sanism. Most recently, Canada’s medical assistance in dying legislation – both its expansions and delays – highlight the many ways in which contemporary theorizations of death and suicidality fail to account for the diverse array of disabled and Mad-identified voices. For some, death is to be warded off at all costs– it evokes panic, anxiety, and uncertainty– but, for others, death is the answer to questions posed by life.

Clearly, death and dying in Canada isn't a uniform experience and is, in fact, deeply political. Moreover, our experiences of death and dying are determined by things like how long we expect to live, if we are deemed to be in possession of agency, bodily autonomy, or mental capacity, and the ways in which our bodies are categorized as normal or abnormal, White or non-White, able or disabled, loved or unloved. Importantly, the contributions in this book do not assume— as the vows “till death do us part” do— that death is experienced in a loving relationship with “the one” (or, even, “the many”) nor that it is necessarily tragic, a defeat, and something to be avoided.

This volume will curate transdisciplinary reflections on, and interrogations and studies of, death in contemporary Canada. Specifically, this collection seeks to examine the intersections between death, dying and (i) temporality, (ii) possession, and (iii) embodiment. Within these thematic sections, this collection is particularly interested in submissions that challenge normative Western assumptions about temporality, dispossession, and embodiment as they relate to death and dying. Possible questions and topics may include, but are not limited to:

- How is death defined differently based on our race, sexuality, ability, etc.? Are life and death exhaustive categories? Do some living things fall into a “neutral zone” between life and death?
- How do Indigenous approaches to studying death and dying challenge or inform Western theoretical or empirical studies of death?
- What does death, or the possibility of death, tell us about the meaning and value of life? What does death, or the possibility of death, tell us about what we need to live?
- Under what conditions is it possible that death might be hopeful? In what ways could dying, or the wish to die, be an expression or agency?
- How are death and dying conceived in law, philosophy, sociology, and other disciplines?

This collection turns heteronormativity on its head by appropriating one of its most well-worn taglines, “till death do us part,” by collecting reflections, interrogations, and provocations about what it means to die (and, often, die alone) in the present moment. By bringing together contemporary, transdisciplinary, and critical interventions, this collection breathes life into conversations around the significance of death and dying.