

## **MONTAIGNE (1533 – 1592)      Impermanence**

There is no place on earth where death cannot find us – even if we constantly twist our heads about in all directions as in a dubious arid suspect land . . . If there were any way of sheltering from death's blows – I am not the man to recoil from it . . . But it is madness to think that you can succeed . . .

Men come and they go and they trot and they dance, and never a word about death. All well and good. yet when death does come – to them, their wives, their children, their friends – catching them unawares and unprepared, then what storms of passion overwhelm them, what cries, what fury, what despair! . . .

To begin depriving death of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a way clean contrary to that common one; let us deprive death of its strangeness, let us frequent it, let us get used to it; let us have nothing more often in mind than death . . . We do not know where death awaits us: so let us wait for it everywhere.

To practice death is to practice freedom. A man who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave.

*Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, Lord of Montaigne was one of the most significant philosophers of the French Renaissance, known for popularizing the essay as a literary genre.*