

# A good Christian mustn't fear the darkness of the grave

by [Jill Alexander Essbaum](#) in the [July 13, 2004](#) issue

But let me tell you about its landscape. Small,  
hot, wooden, and from above no one will hear you murmur  
*let me out*. Out of the darkness nothing's delivered. Still,

you beg it to the brass of the coffin's creak hinge while satin grows stench  
and your death dress rots away. You are livid and left alone.  
The red jasper chaplet in your hand inclines to the pretense

of prayer. You are appalled, shrouded, sutured shut.  
They did not put the pillow in between your knees. And  
your lipstick's smeared. *Once upon*, you wished for a thousand infinities.

Finally arrived, nothing can be more broken, nothing can be  
more than dead. A devilwood tree hones toward the uncarved side  
of your stone. But this, of course, is not the end.