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Literary Anthology
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Special Thanks To

Ellen Dugan  Carmen Saniz
An Epitaph for Someone You Know

He married the long road that takes you there,
and found no fortune.

He embellished a brotherhood of man,
but no friends lingered.

He smiled and he drank for life in itself,
but death knew better.

He came and went just as free as he chose,
he came and he went.

Bob Morse
The Key

Who, me, they
I can not say,
I know not what I may do,
Yesterday, tomorrow, nor today.

This is the beginning of the End.
The End that has come and and then then,
You wonder,
Why, what, when.

The End will come without pain,
Except the pain of nothing did you gain.
Oh life of disorder, orgies , and shame.
Damn,
Damn,
Damn, the pain.

Larry J. Roberto
Dreams, 
mounting with anticipation, 
rise like runaway 
balloons 
on a mad escape 
to the sky. 
Up, 
up and away 
they soar, 
till unrelenting winds 
of reality 
break them all 
one 
by 
one.

rme
Setting: A classroom at Marian College in 1980. Students are arranging scattered chairs into rows. They sit down. Some talk quietly; some stare into space; others begin reading large books. It is the first day of the Fall Semester. The theology teacher, Professor Arthur Nouveau, enters. He is wearing a purple jumpsuit, large blue glasses and has a canvas bag suspended from his shoulder. His hair all but covers his face and his feet are bare.

Prof. N.: (Carelessly dropping the shoulder bag onto the desk.) I'm professor Nouveau, Ph.D., University of Chicago, 1976. Do you hear that? Well, forget it. This academic mickey-mouse doesn't make the scene. Like, God is NOW! Dig? We're going to grab old theology by its big toe and make it yell Janis Joplin! (Waits for a response. None comes.) Any questions?

Red: (After a pause) What about tests?
Prof. N.: Tests? Forget it! Tests isn't where it's at, man. (Another pause) Any of you chicks got a question? (Molly raises her hand.) Lay it on me, baby.

Molly: Do we have to do a paper?
Prof. N.: You're putting me on!
Jim: (Chewing his pencil) If we don't have tests or papers, how do we get a grade?
Prof. N.: It's how you feel, man, how you feel!
Jim: (Spitting out shreds of pencil) How I feel?
Prof. N.: You're on to it, Clyde.
Jim: My name is Jim.
Prof. N.: Right on! (Looks around. Points to Isabelle, who is timidly raising her hand.)
Isabelle: (Sweetly) Do we have an assignment for the next time, Professor Nouveau?
Prof. N.: Call me Art.
Isabelle: Do we have an assignment for next time... Art?
Prof. N.: Yeah. (Students look up.) Your assignment is to BE!
Jim: (Puzzled) To... BE?
Prof. N.: Right on, baby.
Jim: My name is Jim.
Prof. N.: Right on!
Betty: (Hesitantly) What should we be?
Prof. N.: (Raising his hands over his head and slowly turning around) Be the world, the grass, the sun. Get into all kinds of being. Be tomorrow and yesterday. Be space and time, everywhere and nowhere.

Isabelle: (Gasping) That sounds like a whole semester's work, Professor... uh... Art.

Prof. N.: It's where its at.

Red: How do we get a grade for being, Art?

Prof. N.: (Jumping on to the desk) Cool it, man. I love everybody! (Extends his arms in a universal embrace.)

Rick: Do you take roll?

Prof. N.: Roll is evil. Freedom is good.

Rick: (Wide-eyed) You mean we don't have to come to class?

Prof. N.: Do your thing, brother.

Jane: If we don't have any tests or papers, or grades, and if we don't have to come to class, what are we supposed to do?

Prof. N.: (Leaping off the desk and snapping his fingers) Like I say, BE! (A murmur from the class)

Ron: (Breaking in) You mentioned grabbing theology by its big toe...

Prof. N.: You're grooving with me

Prof. N.: (Pointing at Ron) You're grooving with me.

Ron: Well, I was wondering what that meant.

Prof. N.: It means getting the old guy to yell Janis Joplin.

Ron: (Pressing the point) I know. But what I mean is, are we going to have class this semester or just... just BE?

Prof. N.: (Walks to the window and looks out for a long time) There's a leaf falling from that tree. Know what I mean?

Ron: I don't think so.

Prof. N.: Janis is in that leaf.

Ron: (Hesitantly) In... that leaf?

Prof. N.: (Softly) Yeah. (Prof. N. walks back to the desk. After a thoughtful pause, he begins to sing raucuously to a heavy rock beat. As he sings, he sways his hips and flails his arms.)

Kume aww-wn bay-uh-buh, tek muh hay-ay-un
Gone t' duh daay-zhut, waaw-kin inuh sa-ay-un.
Frow-ow-gz an pi-junz in uh ray-ay-un
Gooone t' mek ow-uh worl hol uh-gin.*

*Translation: Come on, Baby, take my hand
Going to the desert, walking in the sand.
Frogs and pigeons in the rain
Going to make our world whole again.
Carol: Excuse me, Art. But who is Janis Joplin?

Prof. N.: (Reverently) A saint. (Another murmur from the class)

Chuck: (Frowning) I’m not sure I understand the assignment yet. Could I come to your office and talk about it? See, I need to get at least a B if...

Prof. N.: Wanna rap? Heavy! You can join our T Group.

Chuck: I don’t know about that. But I would like to find out what you want us to do. Where is your office, Art?

Prof. N.: My office? It’s in the sky.

Chuck: (Lowering his eyes) I see. (Students look at each other. Some open their books. Art hums softly to himself with his eyes closed and his body weaving this way and that.)

Molly: (Firmly) I’m still wondering about a paper.

Prof. N.: Far out.

Molly: You see, there’s this idea I’ve been wanting to work on. It’s about St. Augustine’s notion on predestination and...

Prof. N.: Oh, wow.

Molly: ... and its influence on Calvin’s theology. (Art closes his eyes and begins to hum and sway again.)

Bill: I’d like to do some reading on Bonhoeffer’s idea of religion. (Art hums more loudly.)

Ed: Yeah. Can’t we go to the library or something?

Shirley: We ought to have some tests. I’d like to know where I stand. We can’t just BE all the time. (Sounds of agreement from the class. Art stops humming. Keeps eyes closed.)

Prof. N.: We got bad vibes in here.

Red: Professor Nouveau, we demand that you teach this class.

Isabelle: And have tests.

Molly: And assign papers.

All: And give grades!!!

(The buzzer sounds. Prof. N. picks up his canvas bag, removes a transistor radio, puts the radio to his ear and shuffles out of the room.)
Setting: The faculty lounge. Assorted teachers are scattered around on pillows and rugs. They are passing a cigarette from person to person. A sweet smell pervades the room. Prof. N. enters.

Prof. Hacker: (listlessly) Peace.
Sister Kim: Hi, Art. How’d it go, man?
Prof. N.: (falling into a chair and reaching for the cigarette) Spaced out. I just don’t know where kids are at these days. It’s enough to make me want to go back to the commune.

All: (singing softly)
  Kume awww-wn bay-uh-buh, tek muh hay-ay-un
  Gone t’ duh daay-zhut. . . . . .

CURTAIN
In the quiet dark
I wait,
anticipating nothing.
Our love has not ended ---
it is complete.
And winter
is not the final season:
it is the culmination of a year.
We have built
on dreams and illusions,
only to reveal the fantasies
in the glaring reality
of darkness.
Still,
the sun will rise
tomorrow.

Rosanne DeBoni
In the summer we live lazily
In dwellings of canvas and driftwood,
By the sea. Autumn crept into the air
And we left those sunny sands.
Migration island
To watch the brooding forest
Turn red and gold around us;
To follow trails of spectral smoke
That rise from mounds of burning leaves
In the autumn gloom of twilight.
Wearing coats of deerskin
And painted masks of magic,
We speak of dreams of other worlds
All long since forgotten.

Carol Wallace
Sometimes as the four postered walls
Close in on me,
I feel like a gift-wrapped knick-knack.
When someone comes to open me,
He'll hold me to the light,
Squintingly saying, "What is it?"
But he'll keep me just the same,
Placing me on some end-table
As a semi-cherished possession.
Dust will settle,
Child-handlings will leave their mar.
Oily paintings on the wall
Will be receiving admiring glances
As the maid places me in the drawer.
Never again to be opened,
Never once to be understood.

The Knick-Knack Life

Alice B. Toklas
First Lady

My first sight of spring is but the sparkle of your eyes that puts the morning dew to envy such clear and shining light.

My first love of spring is the soul of one who breaks the old and wizened winter's heart and fills the world with HOPE.

Ellen Dugan
In early youth for manly sport danger I would gladly court
To prove myself a Robin Hood to little friends who roamed the wood
In tattered shirts soiled with dirt and daytime’s meals and snacks.
So towering oaks I climbed with ease as they gazed upward through the leaves
In awesome silence—following my footsteps—and fearing my fall.
With thoughtless ascent of fragile limbs I placed my hand where even squirrels could not stand.

And when a weak bough broke I knew what lay below
It’s a fine art to know where to grab on... when to let go... a fine art.
Oh, I rescued kites, wooden gliders, and autumn’s barren nests
(Spring’s treasure chests) where little fledglings took their rests
As Mother Robins sang lullabies while Father Robins roamed the skies
In search for worms and bread or mud and thread...
Bony trees have taken leave of Spring’s gift and Autumn’s grace
Save lonely leaves... tenacious leaves... who insensitive to season’s change
Hang suspended against nature defiantly deaf to winter’s wind.
Words to shake away illusions of the mind form speech that’s painfully kind

Understood, alone, with the passage of time.
In this late quiet season perhaps silence holds more reason
Than forced words upon a page, imprecise images that mold and fade.
Dulcinea’s dead and gone, Beatrice lies below the ground crowned with thorns of a rose transfigured leaves and shifting snow.
Irreverently perched on a granite cross a windblown sparrow surveys the loss
Of carefully engraved memories carved by loved ones slowly removed by time and forgotten
Though time-worn memories seem so strange perhaps a dream remains unchanged
That the moment does not precede the possibility for a hope-filled unity—a bond of beauty
And vision for a foothold against the wind for a brave new boy eager at dawn
To reach for sunlit nests far above the ground

Brother Roc
Love,
falling,
falls softly
like a snowflake.
Gently, lightly it
drifts
through the air ----
till its cold
kiss
brushes past my face;
chills my spine;
melts away...
and all that’s
left
is its memory.

me
a silent sheet of wetness confronts me
dissolving before my eyes
into thousands of chains of raindrops.

the rich brown of the earth
pulls at my footsteps
slowing my hurried passage.

the newly green bushes scold my hastiness
leaves slapping against me as i pass.

but the warmth of a fire
and the love i see
in softly lighted windows
hurries me on my way.

Kathleen Giesting
Remember the day we drove together from corn fields, through little towns, over steel factories, along the Chicago Skyline, I was quiet as we headed for the Loop; and I tried to take in all the concrete structures, the pollution, the people, and the droning noise of the ells overhead.

Noon hour in the Big City!

Before the idea had registered, we were rushing hand in hand along with the crowd. In and out, around revolving doors, up, down, escalators and stairs, through all kinds of stores.

And then the afternoon became thick and hot; but we were cool inside the elevator riding up to the observatory. Looking out over the Lake and down on the endless, uniform square blocks everything seemed peaceful and ordered.

Soon we were back to the crowds and the cars, sunset passing us by without notice. Colored lights flickered in my eyes while you led me through candle shops, candy shops, and busy cafes of Old Town. Down Piper’s Alley to see glass ships and unicorns and the little glass dog you gave me for a souvenir. We glanced at costumes and paintings behind closed windows. A sidewalk artist sketched a smiling little girl as the first rain dropped on our heads.

We made our way to the car in squeaky, soaked sandals. Tired, I leaned against your shoulder. Leaving I saw red and white lights and dark buildings blurred and fading through the sheet of rain on the windshield. My eyelids fell; I thought, ‘Where are we today?’

Together.

Jolene Griffith

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the charcoal grey of the night sky
covers the grass like the dome
of an ancient mausoleum.
and the bodies lie on the ground
as if they had already felt the cold marble.

the sparkling elixir
quickly fills the rotting bodies
that rely on it for their semblance of life.
but my pity reaches out to those
lying beneath the sky
they have constructed a tomb for themselves
spurning the simpler joys
of all encompassing life.

Kathleen Gething
There is a Stranger in the house
Who lurks now in an aging year.
It’s heard down in the deepest corridor.
Gulfs yawn wide for It to enter.
To let It stalk our darker halls.
It chills our thoughts with night.
Yet daylight brings us pleasure,
We think of warmth and younger days,
Of gala eras and bright prism smiles.
We hear the song of laughing women,
Girls of lilac and gold hair
As fresh as meadow at summer’s dawn.
Noon then slips between our fingers.
We store mementoes of the day,
Of loves we kept that withered and turned grey.
Lying in the attic
Is a plum, gold and crimson,
Whose moisture harbors life.
Its cast is cold, unfeeling
Catching rays of dying light
Autumnal and dust-heavy.
Then night entombs the house again:
The Stranger stalks our corridors
And the jack o’ lantern flickers in the night.

Carol Wallace
Coming home in the darkness
Of the mid-night
Gnaws a solitary
Uplifting of my soul.

With all other acquaintances
   Long retired--my world
Truly becomes my own.
   Once the trivial workings
Of the day that make up
   Its 24-hour schedule
Are asleep--the essence
Of life may be discussed.
   I become my 'day'
Free from the bondage
Of other men's
   Dreams and mandates.
   But still the peace of sleep
Does not come to me.

One wish tears at my
Lonesome heart and pounds
My expressive senses.
That the one upon whom I
Would bare my soul should
Be at my side--sharing a
Quiet road of thoughts and revelations
Soon to fade into the brightness
of the rising sun.

Ellen Dugan
confusion mounts
    blurring the once sharp edges
    of what seemed reality
dreams --- larger than life
    defined now in sharp angles
        stripped of all their cushions,
    naked before me
they taunt me
    hound me
    demand that I see them as they are
and choose
    CHOOSE
those that are sensible,
reality gone -------
    my mind is forced to cry out
for its return
visions crowd my mind
    insisting that I believe in THEM
    pushing
        laughing at my fears.
wakening, I find I was not sleeping
    and there is no way back.
I hold you in
my fingertips
    mine to yours
like
    whorled roses
and deeper
ache than
    all flowers.

I feel you
    in the stems of me
and know
my faults
    like thorns.

You a leaf
with one drop
    of dew,
bright on green,
    clear
as new-swept skies.

You a rose
    in its bed,
    petals folded,
You wait
    for the magic gardener.
I perish,
    impaled
on faults
    like thorns.

Joseph A. Stemp
Autumn:
so fragile, lasting only a second,
as this golden time between us
tarnishes
and we watch the setting sun,
unable to stop it.
The gusty wind
beckons us to dance in abandon,
but our steps are dissonant.
Seeing the glistening present,
denying the imminent cold,
we laugh
at our fleeting doubts.

Rosanne DeBoni
The MAGNOLIA blossoms
Cup their petals in a
Sweet embrace of this
Fleeting sojourn of sun and warmth.

The naivete of Spring's youth
Flits from serenity to squall.

A short outburst of April's tears
Pushes away the tender arms
Of Pink-dimpled white.
Only in the dewy-fingered
Morning lies the despairing
Limbs—Felled by scorn
And ne'er redeemed by
Later bawls of regret.

Ellen Dugan
On any natural day
Paper people press
Together, but bind
Against being bound
So their printed voices
Won’t be smeared.
On any natural day
Paper people parade
Their bare surface
To no one, but
Crease it to the inside
And clutter their covers
With slick covers
On any natural day
Paper people pollute
The shelves of the hard-backed few
With yellowed wordy dust,
Not knowing that on
Any natural day
Paperback people will be the first
To naturally crumble away.

Anne Baldwin
I feel Death coming,
Like a shadow in a molded shroud.
I feel the iced footprints,
Tracking across my brain.

Death engulfing me, sapping all
As it reduced my thought to self.
Broken is spirit, hope,
Sweet is sleep, peace.

Fred Kliban
A bangle of jittering tincans
Awakened me from a dreamy sleep.
Outside a black tomcat
Meows.

Perched on a fence
He bounds like a grey shooting star
To the ground below.
Then audaciously saunters on to
His next disturbance.

Ellen Dugan
No Rhyme

At times I wonder
Why I even try to try --
Like when a friend reads my poems
And only searches in vain for a rhyme.
And when I feel a special feeling for one
To find only he feels no need to feel.
And like the time I was alone,
There was no one to tell that I wanted it that way.

There are more times now
When I wonder even why I try to try.
Many times - alone.
Many times - feeling alone.
There's no rhyme to me,
My sounds never echo back,
Never answer to the beat of my mind.
I can't scratch a word of my verse,
Some feeling syllables must try to match my own.

Anne Baldwin
Like flying kites
we soar to heights
of aspirations.
Dreaming,
seeing our world spent
in gusty sunshine days,
dazzling in wishes-come-true.
We climb,
 eternity just past our fingertips.
We will tumble down soon ---
but not yet.

Rosanne DeBoni
Through the prisms of my mind
corridors of silent thought
weave into half-spent illusion.

Fragmenting wishes
hanging in suspended time
confound my utter helplessness.

Strangely suspended, I stumble
grasping for ideas vaguely distant
wondering where my confusion will lead.

Rudely, I realize
that life is a cruel trick
that promises only nothingness.

Carol Hethington
The lonely sound of leaves crackling beneath my feet remind me that you are not there waiting for me.

Sherry Meyer
Love stalks me at every corner
   Keep me from final peace.
I run hopelessly
   hopelessly
Madly casting it aside...
But it never relents
Constantly, constantly
Snatching away my freedom,
Until nothing remains but
   sadness.

Carol Kethington
Some of us never

or

jump

or
dance

to another's song
Hold fast to dreams
for if dreams die
life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Langston Hughes