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## Grandmother Dead in the Aeroplane

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JOHN LOGAN

## GRANDMOTHER DEAD IN THE AEROPLANE

Grandmother after that late eclipse  
 when I lay drunk in the weak, April grass  
 and watched the moon on the last, best Friday night  
 grow awful and cruel and then lean  
 slowly out of the light  
 (become an odd, dark rock  
 under which some of us  
 still have our moving lives) —  
 after that you can hold the very first  
 of your favorite Easters.  
 At least a good and gaudy card  
 came each year before you died.  
 There is no message yet this time.  
 Instead I feel you addressed  
 and mailed me on this Saturday plane.  
 Grandmother you have verified the myth  
 inside my head. . . . Inside my head  
 I carry your gentle, senile hunch-  
 back and your swollen ankles  
 still shuffle here in the airplane's halls.  
 Your rheumy, red old eyes leak out all our tears.  
 Look out, Grandmother!  
 Or else I will look in. The plane  
 window angles near us (well, between)  
 and your face  
 reflects. You are spread  
 thin and shiny over all this Holy Saturday.  
 Grandmother is there ever any Easter  
 without a hope? And will the moon  
 be light  
 for the Saturday dance again tonight?  
 I am angry at myself since you've died.  
 The 727 motor at my ear  
 is joining me fast to Detroit  
 on my Easter trip  
 and it has quite  
 disoriented my small, waning life.  
 Everything has died.  
 I'll learn how to mourn quite mad  
 if never to rave in love.

I want to stay up here forever,  
grandmother. For I am tired of the fogged earth  
down there  
with its esoteric itch of flesh.  
"Time Flies." I swear my soul has just turned  
ninety too. On the night I visited  
and stayed  
in your sad, old ladies' home  
I really shook. Sick, I shivered  
from the barbed, tiny animals of dread.  
I kissed you and I cried  
and tried to sleep  
in the ancient woman's bed  
(your absent friend)—  
her family plastered to the wall.  
something flickered back  
and forth in me, black and white,  
and I touched myself heavily  
again and again  
to see if the young  
man (I was twenty then) was anywhere around.  
Oh you and I too have had our scenes,  
since I was the chosen one.  
When I was ten  
and you were visiting the farm  
you unwrapped your long,  
red, lacy velvet doll  
and then undid the bones  
of china for its tiny house.  
You took the picture albums  
out of the attic trunk. And took that  
milky, moonshaped paperweight.  
We squatted crosslegged on the attic planks  
and swayed and wept for what  
you made me think  
the two of us had lost.  
Was it really only you  
who were not young  
and who no longer had a home?  
Oh, I did love you my ardent old Mom.  
It was the second time for me,  
my first mother gone.  
You pushed me proudly in my pram

and I remember this:  
I wet my pants  
right in front of your friends  
until I knew you noticed me.  
You fixed the rockers on my broken horse.  
And just before the picnic once  
put a poultice on my swelling thumb  
to draw the sliver out.  
Now I watch the nail's moon  
blacken by my pen.  
Look. My plane has never gone  
far: it hovers in your air.  
Christ what am I doing here?  
Communing with you I guess.  
Well then, come on,  
my beloved crone. Open up.  
Now I lay me down  
in your aged lap and sleep  
clean through this Easter.

Easter, 1968