Grandmother Dead in the Aeroplane

John Logan
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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.

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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