

The Art of Losing: Poems of Grief and Healing

By Kevin Young

The Art of Losing is the first anthology of its kind, delivering poetry with a purpose. Editor Kevin Young has introduced and selected 150 devastatingly beautiful poems that embrace the pain and heartbreak of mourning. Divided into five sections (Reckoning, Remembrance, Rituals, Recovery, and Redemption), with poems by some of our most beloved poets as well as the best of the current generation of poets, *The Art of Losing* is the ideal gift for a loved one in a time of need and for use by therapists, ministers, rabbis, and palliative care workers who tend to those who are experiencing loss.

Among the poets included: Elizabeth Alexander, W. H. Auden, Amy Clampitt, Billy Collins, Emily Dickinson, Louise Gluck, Ted Hughes, Galway Kinnell, Kenneth Koch, Philip Larkin, Li-Young Lee, Philip Levine, Marianne Moore, Sharon Olds, Mary Oliver, Robert Pinsky, Adrienne Rich, Theodore Roethke, Anne Sexton, Wallace Stevens, Dylan Thomas, Derek Walcott, and James Wright.

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From Publishers Weekly

Young (*Dear Darkness*) is not only a prolific and acclaimed poet, but also the editor of several anthologies of poems, by African-American poets, inspired by the blues and jazz, and from the body of work by John Berryman. This latest anthology is his most topical, and, perhaps, his most useful, gathering poems about suffering and overcoming loss. Organized around subjects such as Regret, Remembrance, and Ritual, this book includes poets both canonical and contemporary, with perhaps a refreshingly larger helping of the latter: poets like Marianne More, Philip Larkin, and Elizabeth Bishop join newer names like D.A. Powell, Matthew Dickman, and Meghan O'Rourke; there are also plenty of reigning masters, like Louise Glück. Death is nature's way/ of telling you to be quiet, writes Franz Wright, somewhat harshly. With calmer acceptance, Theodore Roethke reminds us of the need to wake to sleep, and take my waking slow. While these poems won't offer easy answers to grief, they will keep the kind of company that only poetry can, because only poetry can convincingly say, as Ruth Stone does in the last poem of this book, All things come to an end./ No, they go on forever. (*Mar.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Poet Young, author of six vividly imagined collections, puts on his editor's hat, one he wears well in previous anthologies dedicated to blues and jazz poems as well as here in this unique and invaluable gathering of contemporary poems of grief and healing. This effort stems from his memorializing his late father in *Dear Darkness* (2008), a loss that sharpened his perceptions of what Young cites as "a poetry of necessity." As he observes, "No one wants to write an elegy." But "we simply must." And in writing, reading, and listening to elegies, understanding, solidarity, and solace are found. Young offers an original and personal analysis of the modern elegy, and uses his own experience with the cycle of mourning to structure the book in sections titled "Reckoning," "Regret," "Remembrance," "Ritual," "Recovery," and "Redemption." And the poems are as diverse and universal as the emotions of loss. Poems by Dylan Thomas, Sharon Olds, Mary Jo Bang, Nick Flynn, Natasha Trethewey, Cornelius Eady, Gerald Stern, Lucille Clifton, and many others exquisitely and empathically translate pain into beauty, sorrow into catharsis. -- Donna Seaman

Review

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“[Young’s] latest anthology is his most topical, and, perhaps, his most useful, gathering poems about suffering and overcoming loss ... While these poems won’t offer easy answers to grief, they will keep the kind of company that only poetry can, because only poetry can convincingly say, as Ruth Stone does in the last poem of this book, ‘All things come to an end. / No, they go on forever.’”—***Publishers Weekly***

“‘Grief,’ wrote Denise Levertov, ‘is a hole you walk around in the daytime and at night you fall into it.’ Here, Kevin Young has thoughtfully gathered many of these sorrowful perambulations and grievous plummets.”—**Billy Collins**

“A book for easing the heart in pain. A chorus of poets (the first of its kind) brought together expressly to guide us through dark times when ‘the eye begins to see.’

Kevin Young is the right guy at the right time to do this. Brilliant.”—**Mark Matousek, author of *When You’re Falling, Dive and Ethical Wisdom***

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