

Classic Poetry Series

Alan Dugan

- poems -

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Drunken Memories Of Anne Sexton

The first and last time I met
my ex-lover Anne Sexton was at
a protest poetry reading against
some anti-constitutional war in Asia
when some academic son of a bitch,
to test her reputation as a drunk,
gave her a beer glass full of wine
after our reading. She drank
it all down while staring me
full in the face and then said
"I don't care what you think,
you know," as if I was
her ex-what, husband, lover,
what? And just as I
was just about to say I
loved her, I was, what,
was, interrupted by my beautiful enemy
Galway Kinnell, who said to her
"Just as I was told, your eyes,
you have one blue, one green"
and there they were, the two
beautiful poets, staring at
each others' beautiful eyes
as I drank the lees of her wine.

Alan Dugan

Elegy

I know but will not tell
you, Aunt Irene, why there
are soap suds in the whiskey:
Uncle Robert had to have
A drink while shaving.

Alan Dugan

Nomenclature

My mother never heard of Freud
and she decided as a little girl
that she would call her husband Dick
no matter what his first name was
and did. He called her Ditty. They
called me Bud, and our generic names
amused my analyst. That must, she said,
explain the crazy times I had in bed
and quoted Freud: "Life is pain."
"What do women want?" and "My
prosthesis does not speak French."

Alan Dugan

On Looking for Models

The trees in time
have something else to do
besides their treeing. What is it.
I'm a starving to death
man myself, and thirsty, thirsty
by their fountains but I cannot drink
their mud and sunlight to be whole.
I do not understand these presences
that drink for months
in the dirt, eat light,
and then fast dry in the cold.
They stand it out somehow,
and how, the Botanists will tell me.
It is the "something else" that bothers
me, so I often go back to the forests.

Alan Dugan

Swing Shift Blues

What is better than leaving a bar
in the middle of the afternoon
besides staying in it or not
having gone into it in the first place
because you had a decent woman to be with?
The air smells particularly fresh
after the stale beer and piss smells.
You can stare up at the whole sky:
it's blue and white and does not
stare back at you like the bar mirror,
and there's Whats-'is-name coming out
right behind you saying, "I don't
believe it, I don't believe it: there
he is, staring up at the fucking sky
with his mouth open. Don't
you realize, you stupid son of a bitch,
that it is a quarter to four
and we have to clock in in
fifteen minutes to go to work?"
So we go to work and do no work
and can even breathe in the Bull's face
because he's been into the other bar
that we don't go to when he's there.

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