

Jennifer Kimball

"Gagna's Song"

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For years I've been ready to let go of this life -
My friends, my wife already gone.
I was an old man then, now I'm senior to the
octogenarians.

I was born in the year 1899, each July I'm one year
ahead.
From Ipswich to Oberlin, Salisbury, Rome,
The people I loved have all gone.

"Just remember we love you," they say by my bed.
"We're here and we're holding your hands.
Just remember we love you, and this will always be.
You're going to join Nonna, our mother,
You're beloved, Josephine Jewel."

I loved her in Manhattan. I loved her in Rome.
I took her to Maine by the sea.
I whistled and painted, and walked with her there.
And she sang the high parts for me.

So take this weight off my chest.

Take this ache from my heart.
Take this breath from my lungs.
Let me slip away forever, let me be what we become.

And they'll sing for me, the men from school,
A silver dollar tune.
I'll fly over the villas of Florence and Brittany,
And graveyards with headstones for boys
Who died in the 2nd World War.

My affairs are in order, my children are grandparents,
My work stands here and abroad -
From houses to rowboats, headstones to lithographs,
Libraries, watercolors and oils.

Oh, there've been disappointments, but mostly I'm sure,
I wouldn't change a thing for this world.
I open my arms. My body will close.
And I go into the dream - the dream that never ends.

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