

I Dreamed That I Was Old

By Stanley Kunitz

I dreamed that I was old: in stale declension
Fallen from my prime, when company
Was mine, cat-nimbleness, and green invention,
Before time took my leafy hours away.

My wisdom, ripe with body's ruin, found
Itself tart recompense for what was lost
In false exchange: since wisdom in the ground
Has no apocalypse or pentecost.

I wept for my youth, sweet passionate young thought,
And cozy women dead that by my side
Once lay: I wept with bitter longing, not
Remembering how in my youth I cried.

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Source: Selected Poems 1928-1958 (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1958)



Stanley Kunitz was born in Worcester, Massachusetts and received a BA and MA from Harvard. His first book of poetry, *Intellectual Things*, was published in 1930, but it was not until the 1950s, when he received the Pulitzer Prize, that he gained widespread recognition. His poetry gradually evolved, from the very formal, heavily metered, esoteric poetry of his early years, to the conversational, free verse, "transparent" poems of his later years.