

# April Fool Birthday Poem for Grandpa

*by Diane di Prima*

Today is your  
birthday and I have tried  
writing these things before,  
but now  
in the gathering madness, I want to  
thank you  
for telling me what to expect  
for pulling  
no punches, back there in that scrubbed Bronx parlor  
thank you  
for honestly weeping in time to  
innumerable heartbreaking  
italian operas for  
pulling my hair when I  
pulled the leaves off the trees so I'd  
know how it feels, we are  
involved in it now, revolution, up to our  
knees and the tide is rising, I embrace  
strangers on the street, filled with their love and  
mine, the love you told us had to come or we  
die, told them all in that Bronx park, me listening in  
spring Bronx dusk, breathing stars, so glorious  
to me your white hair, your height your fierce  
blue eyes, rare among italians, I stood  
a ways off looking up at you, my grandpa  
people listened to, I stand  
a ways off listening as I pour out soup  
young men with light in their faces  
at my table, talking love, talking revolution  
which is love, spelled backwards, how  
you would love us all, would thunder your anarchist wisdom  
at us, would thunder Dante and Giordano Bruno, orderly men  
bent to your ends, well I want you to know  
we do it for you, and your ilk, for Carlo Tresca,  
for Sacco and Vanzetti, without knowing  
it, or thinking about it, as we do it for Aubrey Beardsley  
Oscar Wilde (all street lights  
shall be purple), do it  
for Trotsky and Shelley and big/dumb  
Kropotkin  
Eisenstein's Strike people, Jean Cocteau's ennui, we do it for  
the stars over the Bronx  
that they may look on earth  
and not be ashamed.

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