

## Our Old Toast: "To life."

Erri De Luca (March 31, 2016)



Erri De Luca and Gianmaria Testa. Two immense poets. Words dedicated to a special friend who left us. A face to face that does not want to quit. Gianmaria Testa (17 October 1958 in Cavallermaggiore - 30 March 2016 in Alba)

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Your voice climbs up the balcony, whispers to the love struck which words to say to the woman there. Your voice is Cyrano, hidden in the garden, teaching Cristiano the syllables that will earn Rosana's kisses.

They are the syllables of the rain, which lift the coat and rest it on the bare shoulders of his beloved,

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one of the handful of sacred moves a man is blessed with. Your songs give a boy the chance to be a man, a man the chance to be a boy again. As long as you sing, the two ages – the raw and cooked – are joined again.

As long as you sing, the man will stick a sprig of nettle in his jacket, pin a butterfly to his collar, put his arm around a woman's waist, dance a waltz, twirl a tango. Sealed by the music of the wind, the couple shines. Your song has a whiff of old timey music. Men and women talk cheek-to-cheek, smell each other's hair, leave their breath on each other's necks. You write of nothing but lovers, flesh laid bare with a knife.

Only lovers, their pas de deux draws looks from us soldiers, stuck in our ranks, kept from cutting loose, from unbuttoning our collars, from running off. In an age of taking up arms, all you took up was a guitar. In a time when people cling to religion to lash out, you clink a glass of wine and make our old toast: "To life."

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