The responsibility of the living to the dead is not simple. It is we who let them go, for we do not accompany them. It is we who hold them here—deny them their nothingness—by naming their names. Out of these two wrongs comes the writing of epitaphs.

ANNE CARSON, "EPITAPHS," 1999

THE WAKE OF ANOTHER'S DEATH is often when we paradoxically feel and seek their presence most keenly. As we seek their trace in the words or objects they left behind, our own words in response seek to close the gap. The word for mourning in Japanese, *tsuitō* (追悼) or "follow in grief," suggests the nature of this pursuit. It can be undertaken in elegiac prose or poems (*tsuitōbun* or *tsuitōka*) or sometimes, as we have seen, sought in gravestones, memorial statues, death masks, or manga. These various writings in memoriam offer a means for those left behind to encounter and mourn their dead.

When the writer themselves is aging as well, these moments of pursuit can be especially poignant as they confront their own mortality. In Etō Jun's case, the majority of respondents were older men born in the early decades of the twentieth century, like Yoshimoto Taka'aki (b. 1924), who, as he put it, "breathed air of the same generation," or Ōba Minako (b. 1930), the only woman represented in the vast number of memorial essays in *Bungakukai*. In pursuing Etō, these writers were perhaps also pursuing their own deaths.[1]

Yoshimoto, for example, sympathetically notes how the closed circle of illness renders the elderly unable to convey anything of their spiritual existential angst (or what he calls "aging pains," *rōku*, 老苦) and instead consigns them to reciting their bodily woes "like a pharmacy advertisement." Because his own physical ailments keep him from fulfilling his promise to offer incense at Etō's memorial service, Yoshimoto concludes his essay with his hope that "this piece of writing could suffice to lament the self-death of Etō Jun as much as a single stick of incense" (*Kono bunshō ga ippon no senkō hodo ni, Etō Jun no jishi o itamu koto ni natte itara saiwai kore ni sugiru koto wa nai*).[2] Ōba similarly recalls Etō's asking

her to take part in his cremation ceremony and to collect some of his bones, but she, too, is bedridden and unable to attend. Instead, she closes her short piece with these lines:

> I cradle Etō-san's bones in the palm of my hand while lying on my sickbed in the complete darkness . … With a feeling as if the entire landscape slowly recedes in the distance.
>
> Byōtoko de yokotawatta mama yami no naka de Etō-san no hone o tenohira de kakonde . … Zūn to mawari-chū no fūkei ga tōnoite yuku yō na kibun de aru.[3]

Here, both Ōba and Yoshimoto encounter the body of the dead in writing and offer their own writings as substitutes for their own bodily presence at the memorial ceremony. Again, writings speak out to, and from, the darkness to dialogue with the dead.

In this final section, "Mourning in Multimedia," I turn to examples of artists who memorialized themselves and others in a host of media, moving from the self-eulogizing poetry and aphoristic prose of the young poets Haraguchi Tōzō and Nagasawa Nobuko in the mid- to late 1940s to the canonized and underground stories, films, and photographs of Mishima Yukio that continue to appear to this day.