

THE BIG LITTLE BOOK OF LITERARY DEATHS



DEATH



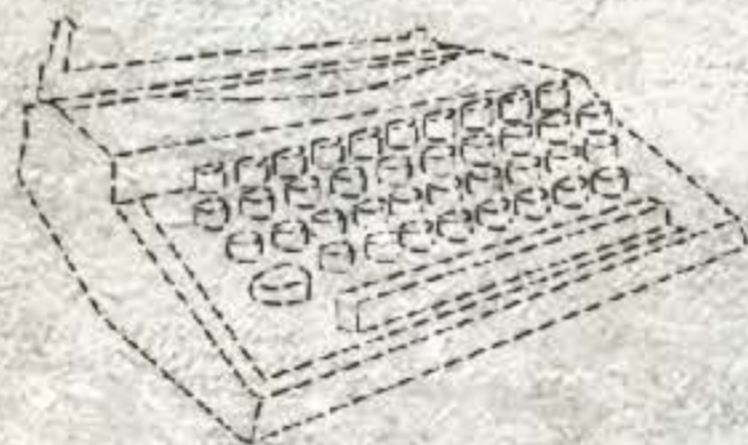
THE MUSE

"PUBLISH...OR PERISH!"

THE
BIG LITTLE
BOOK

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"multis verbis, modicum tempis"

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Famed writer Edgar Allan Poe's (1809 – 1849) untimely death at the age of forty is as replete with horror and as shrouded in mystery as anything the troubled man ever penned.

The facts of Poe's death are few. On October 3rd, 1849, he was found at Gunners Hall, a Baltimore tavern, in a pitiful state: wildly incoherent and wearing clothes that were not his.

Admitted to a local hospital, he was never lucid enough to reveal what had occurred, and he died 4 days later.

Edgar Allan Poe

American Writer

January 19th, 1809 - October 7th, 1849



Cause of death: Suicide by alcohol poisoning
(debated)

Virginia Woolf (1882 – 1941) who came of age during the Modernist movement in literature and went on to become one of its greatest exemplars, had long struggled with mental illness.

In 1941, at the age of 59, Woolf's mental health reached a nadir. Troubled by professional disappointment and disturbed by hallucinations in which she heard birds speaking to her in ancient Greek, Woolf went to the River Ouse near her home, filled her pockets with stones, and plunged into the water.

Virginia Woolf

English Writer



January 25th, 1882 - March 28th, 1941

Cause of death: Suicide by drowning

Born in New Orleans, Louisiana, John Kennedy Toole's (1937-1969) life was, by all outward appearances, a towering success story.

But in one important regard – his hoped-for literary career – Toole was frustrated by failure. Unable to find a publisher for his novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, Toole slipped further into frustration and mental illness, eventually dying by suicide in 1969.

Confederacy would eventually be published in 1980, earning Toole a posthumous Pulitzer Prize in 1981.

John Kennedy Toole

American Writer

December 17th, 1937 - March 26th, 1969



Cause of death: Suicide by carbon monoxide poisoning

Kurt Gödel (1906-1978) was one of the most celebrated and visionary logicians and philosophers in history. His famed "incompleteness theorem" proved mathematics (and by extension any system of logic) can never be fully self-consistent.

Sadly, Gödel developed a mental disorder later in life which induced in him an irrational fear of poisoning. As his mental decline worsened, he refused to eat any food at all, and he died of malnutrition on January 14th, 1978, at the age of 71.

Kurt Gödel

Austrian Mathematician

April 28th, 1906 - January 14th, 1978



Cause of death: Suicide by hunger strike

Diogenes (c. 412 BCE – c. 323 BCE) was a founder of the philosophical school of Cynicism, and a sardonic critic of (what he perceived to be) the many follies of his fellow Athenians.

Numerous colorful tales surround the life of Diogenes, but separating fact from fiction after so many centuries is all but impossible. His death, too, is the source of much fanciful speculation, with one popular theory insisting that he died from holding his breath too long (a method of suicide quite impossible on dry land).

Diogenes of Sinope

Greek philosopher

c. 412 BCE - c. 323 BCE



Cause of Death: Suicide by Holding Breath

(Apocryphal)

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