



# **After Words: Suicide and Authorship in Twentieth-Century Italy (Toronto Italian Studies)**

*Elizabeth Leake*

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*After Words* investigates the ways in which the suicide of a writer informs critical interpretations of his or her works. Suicide is a revision as well as a form of authorship, both on the part of the author, who has written his/her final scene and revised the 'natural' course of his/her life, and on the part of the reader, who must make sense of this final act of writing.

Focusing on four twentieth-century Italian writers (Guido Morselli, Amelia Rosselli, Cesare Pavese, and Primo Levi), Elizabeth Leake examines their personal correspondence, diaries, and obituaries as well as popular and academic commemorative writings about them and their works in order to elucidate the ramifications of their suicides for their readership. Arguing that authorial suicide points to the limitations of those critical stances that exclude the author from the practice of reading, Leake's insightful re-reading of these authors and their texts shows that in the aftermath of suicide, an author's life and death themselves become texts to be read.

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