



Last Flight Out: Living, Loving & Leaving

Phyllis A. Langton

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Above all, Phyllis Langton's memoir, *Last Flight Out: Living, Loving & Leaving*, is a passionate love story, one that deepens as she and her husband George Thomas live their way into the experience of ALS, its unrelenting losses and its surprising gifts, with dignity, keen humor, a fighter pilot's courage and a nurse's unsentimental pragmatism. "I know what's going to be on my death certificate. That's more than you can say," George tells her after receiving his diagnosis. How they are going to live the time that remains to them as a couple is also not in question, for they are equally committed to savoring every minute, respecting George Thomas's choices about what makes for a meaningful life, a meaningful death. Supporting her husband's wishes is a moral as well as emotional choice on Langton's part, and definitely not always an easy one. As a medical sociologist, she invites her readers into an open discussion of some of these choices through a thoughtful discussion guide. "Phyllis Langton has had as illustrious a career as anyone in academia, but she has taken infinite pains now to write a different kind of book. Her story of her husband's life with and death from ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) yields many a valuable lesson. . . . Here love and mortality, laughter and sorrow are all but inseparable, and their inseparability may help lessen a reader's fear of death and dying. Anyone who enjoys a deeply moving story will want to read this wondrous, indispensable book, and anybody who faces adversity, that is to say, everybody will need to read it," Jeffery Paine, author of *Father India*, *Re-enchantment*, *Adventures with the Buddha*, and *Tales of Wonder*. "Who would have thought that disease can be a page-turner? But Phyllis Langton's bittersweet memoir of her fighter-pilot husband's last years shows that a good marriage can be as joyous in sickness as it is in health," Mark Weston, author of *Giants of Japan*. "In my 28 years as a healthcare chaplain I have observed the journey toward death Phyllis Langton portrays in *Last Flight Out*. But I am a professional who only sees those brief moments I am at the hospital or nursing home bedside or visiting in someone's home. Langton invites us into her life with her husband George as he moves through increasing disability to his final breaths. It is moving and, in my view, honest," Chaplain Hank Dunn, author of *Hard Choices for Loving People*. "I couldn't put *Last Flight Out* down. . . . What an incredible message to read especially with a disease that takes and takes," Sharon J. Matland, R.N., M.B.A.--V.P. Patient Services, ALS Association. Phyllis A. Langton, Ph.D., R.N., Professor Emerita, Sociology, George Washington University, is the author of numerous scholarly articles and books. *Last Flight Out* is her first memoir.

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