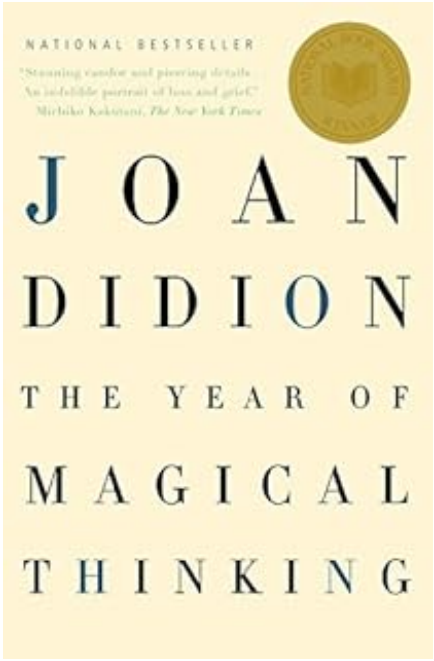
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The Year of Magical Thinking



Joan Didion. 2006. Vintage Books

Just before Christmas 2003, Didion and her husband John saw their adult daughter Quintana suffer from pneumonia and septic shock, and then enter an induced coma. A few days later John died from a fatal heart attack.

Didion, an author living in New York, relates these events and her life the following year, including Quintana's slow but complicated recovery. Written in the first person, the text is like a journal, with back-and-forth reflections, of Didion's experience of and insights into grief and mourning after sudden death.

The book relates her anguish and how her feelings progressed – her initial extreme vulnerability, nakedness, and openness; her denial that John was really dead; her frequent mental efforts to "reverse time, run the film backward".

Towards the end of the book, she reflects, "We are imperfect mortal beings, aware of that mortality even as we push it away, failed by our very complication, so wired that when we mourn our losses we also mourn, for better or for worse, ourselves. As we were. As we are no longer."

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Translation disclaimer: Content originally written in English.