

The Old Woman

What do you see nurse, what do you see?
What are you thinking when you look at me?
A difficult old woman, not very wise;
Uncertain of habit with far away eyes.
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply,
When you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you would try."
Who seems not to notice the things that you do
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe.
Who unresisting or not, lets you do as you will
With bathing and feeding, the long day to fill.
Is that what you are thinking? Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes nurse, you are not looking at me.
I'll tell you who I am, as I sit here so still,
As I come at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of ten with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another.
A young girl of sixteen with wings on her feet,
Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet.
A bride soon at twenty, my heart gives a leap
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.
At twenty-five now I have young of my own
Who need me to build a secure happy home.
A woman of thirty, my young now grown fast,
Bound to each other with ties that should last.
At forty my young sons have grown and are gone,
But my man's beside me to see I don't mourn.
At fifty once more babies play around my knees;
Again we know children, my loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead.
I look at the future and shudder with dread;
For my young are all rearing young of their own
And I think of the years and the love that I've known.
I'm an old woman now and nature is cruel;
'Tis her jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body crumbles, grace and vigour depart;
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.

But inside this old carcase a young girl still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells.
I remember the joys, I remember the pain,
And I'm living and loving life over again.
I think of the years, all too few gone too fast
And accept the fact that nothing can last.
So open your eyes nurse, open and see
Not a difficult old woman, look closer, SEE ME!