

BEWARE OF GRANDMA!

A blooming ancestor their grandmother and mother
Walks trails with friends in national parks

Eats nothing on holidays feasts on lush landscapes
Scenery fresh delicious but never overpowering

Bird song fills her with love from the cosmos
Ensures no need for holiday dinners or cleanups

Far from awkward phone conversations
About a son's or daughter's latest exploit

Where is this family of the Land's End ad
Sparkling in greens and reds whites golds?

They pose with wan smiles no grandma near a tree
Groaning with ornaments floor littered with packages

Shrouded with enough paper to stuff landfills
Some large enough to choke a blue whale

Perhaps there are genetic or cultural platforms
Undergirding this strange portrait

This small crowd stables a black SUV a red truck
And a metallic sea-green Volvo to dress up in

Remember the maxim: "God gave us our relatives

Thank god we choose our own friends "

This is America land of independence
From whatever warmth or wisdom Grandma might exude

Freedom from her concerns her face a reminder
That one day they too may be old weak alone

This is America land of Wal-Mart wonders
Where those fit to run will make it big

Those who are aged or frail must fall or fail
Be put aside where they cannot be a nuisance

The heedless young ones carry on
Consuming almost everything in or out of sight

While the outcast wily grandma carries on a revolution
With a small army of compatriots ancient and powerful

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WHAT IF?

***What if Ginger succumbed
to Alzheimer's for dogs?
She could no longer decide
who is friend or foe
She would run after the bobcat
till it flattened her
She would follow a butterfly
all the way to Hornitos
She might eat dirt***

or think the carpet is her toilet

*Would she recognize me
as her bare-skinned sister?
Could she remember
the trips we took together?
Dodging snakes and cactuses
in the Texas desert?
Looking for alligators
and chasing armadillos in Florida?
Waiting for the red squirrel
to stop swearing out of reach?*

*Ah how we have enjoyed our lives together!
She has been the staunchest friend I've ever
had
She is a true Elder
of the canine kind
But if she became irresponsible
silly or unwise
I would cherish every inch of her then
as much as I do now*

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AGE BEFORE BEAUTY

Yes yes yes and yes!

The older the manzanita gets the more beautiful
As years pass it becomes more fascinating
We can scarcely keep our fingers off
As its silky skin like mahogany or dried blood
Becomes shaggy with papery excrescences
curled and rolled
Branches explode in number like fireworks
Exhibitionist! A flagrant show for all onlookers
Of mesmerizing riches intrinsic to the ancient

**One such immense and gnarly mountain shrub
Attracted a whole family of cougars
Who scratched their initials on her trunks
Till she gave it up and died from their ardor
They loved her to death we might say
Leaving tufts of yellow fur along her flanks
After a dozen years she stands today
Her countless arms reaching out in death
To dispense an all-inclusive invitation
And gather admiration of Everything and Everyone
She so well deserves**

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TO THE GATHERING

What is meant by the term offered in reverent tones

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"Elder?"

*Who makes the decision about entry into the club?
All Elders here, please raise your right hand!
What do we mean with the words: "grown up?"*

*One thing I've said to get me off the hook
About a lot of stuff is this wise-ass remark:
"We never really grow up We just get wrinkly"*

*Maybe those of us who are here
Believe that we are or are fast becoming Elders!
Or hope (or dread) we shall so become!*

*Whatever... We are here!
Curiosity and urge to merge our minds and hearts
To explore the biz of Elderhood or being el-der-ly
To see that we have cohorts and are not alone
Has brought us to this place on earth in time
To experience with Carolyn and Brugh
We cannot know what...*

*We cannot know what
The next few revolutions of our Mother Earth will bring*

*We have a plan to make our congress tidy
Like a gift wrapped carefully to disguise its insides*

*Perhaps the best outcome shock and awe
Will be what we never imagined we would find*

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DANCING WITH TIME

Longwang and Damrey Rita and Wilma
Who has not had something dear swept away?
Time our gnarly invention a constant partner
Enters the ballroom without our notice
Or invitation

It slides quiet as a moth's wing
Over our faces through and down our spines
Sweeps us up for the long dance
Will not let us go or sit down
Whistles in our ears

Time and his cohorts take
What we cannot hoard in the safe
Homeland Security cannot put up walls
To keep this beast persistent as planets in retro
Detained on the steps

Time steals our mother and father
Our favorite grandma or uncle
Sometimes our children our talents
Our youthful looks strength agility
Mental acuity

As we dance we begin to note
A limp an odd pain in the hip
Slow down! We cry as we stumble along
Our human partner is tired
Pleased to break the pace

How lovely for us just to let go!
Sex is better now than before You know

Where I want you to touch me
Where I want you not to touch me
I can say it now!

We know now why the Elder
Is thrilled when a rare bird flies by
Even if someone has to tell him so
How grateful we are not to fly out the door
For job interviews

Time cannot steal the spirit
Which abides through our last breath on earth
If the eyes cannot see the ears cannot hear
We can indeed sense the best of all that there is
Enfolding us LOVE!

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