

Crabby Old Woman

What do you see nurses?
What do you see?
What are you thinking
When you are looking at me?

A crabby old woman,
Not very wise,
Uncertain of habit,
With faraway eyes?

Who dribbles her food
And makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice,
“I do wish you’d try!”

Who seems not to notice
The things that you do,
And forever is losing
A stocking or shoe?

Who, resisting 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’re not looking at me.

I’ll tell you who I am
As I sit here so still,
As I do 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 guide
And 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 round my knee,
Again we know children,
My loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me,
My husband is dead,
I look at the future,
I 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 now an old woman
And nature is cruel;
'Tis jest to make old age
Look like a fool.

The body, it crumbles,
Grace and vigor depart,
There is now a stone
Where I once had a heart.

But inside this old carcass
A young girl still dwells,
And now and again,
My battered heart swells.

I remember the joys,
I remember the pain,
And I'm loving and living
Life over again.

I think of the years
All too few, gone too fast,
And accept the stark fact
That nothing can last.

So open your eyes, people,
Open and see,
Not a crabby old woman;
Look closer ... see ME!!

When an old lady died in the geriatric ward of a small hospital near Dundee, Scotland, it was believed that she had nothing left of value. Later, when the nurses were going through her meager possessions, they found this poem.

It's quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital.

One nurse took her copy to Ireland. The old lady's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas edition of the News Magazine of the North Ireland Association for Mental Health. A slide presentation has also been made based on her simple, but eloquent, poem. And this little old Scottish lady, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this "**anonymous**" poem winging across the Internet.

Remember this poem when you next meet an elderly person who you might brush aside without looking at the young soul within ... we will one day be there, too!

STORY OF A CAB RIDE

Twenty years ago, I drove a cab for a living. When I arrived at 2:30a.m., the building was dark except for a single light in a ground floor window.

Under these circumstances, many drivers would just honk once or twice, wait a minute, then drive away. But, I had seen too many impoverished people who depended on taxis as their only means of transportation. Unless a situation smelled of danger, I always went to the door.

This passenger might be someone who needs my assistance, I reasoned to myself. So I walked to the door and knocked. "Just a minute", answered a frail, elderly voice. I could hear something being dragged across the floor.

After a long pause, the door opened. A small woman in her 80's stood before me. She was wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it, like somebody out of a 1940s movie. By her side was a small nylon suitcase.

The apartment looked as if no one had lived in it for years. All the furniture was covered with sheets. There were no clocks on the walls, no knickknacks or utensils on the counters. In the corner was a cardboard box filled with photos and glassware.

"Would you carry my bag out to the car?" she said. I took the suitcase to the cab, then returned to assist the woman. She took my arm and we walked slowly toward the curb. She kept thanking me for my kindness.

"It's nothing", I told her. "I just try to treat my passengers the way I would want my mother treated". "Oh, you're such a good boy", she said.

When we got in the cab, she gave me an address, then asked, "Could you drive through downtown?" "It's not the shortest way," I answered quickly. "Oh, I don't mind," she said. "I'm in no hurry. I'm on my way to a hospice".

I looked in the rear-view mirror. Her eyes were glistening. "I don't have any family left," she continued. "The doctor says I don't have very long." I quietly reached over and shut off the meter.

"What route would you like me to take?" I asked.

For the next two hours, we drove through the city. She showed me the building where she had once worked as an elevator operator. We drove through the neighborhood where she and her husband had lived when they were newlyweds. She had me pull up in front of a furniture warehouse! that had once been a ballroom where she had gone dancing as a girl. Sometimes she'd ask me to slow in front of a particular building or corner and would sit staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

As the first hint of sun was creasing the horizon, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now."

We drove in silence to the address she had given me. It was a low building, like a small convalescent home, with a driveway that passed under a portico. Two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as we pulled up. They were solicitous and intent, watching her every move. They must have been expecting her. I opened the trunk and took the small suitcase to the door. The woman was already seated in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" she asked, reaching into her purse.

"Nothing," I said.

"You have to make a living," she answered.

"There are other passengers," I responded.

Almost without thinking, I bent and gave her a hug. She held onto me tightly. "You ! gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you."

I squeezed her hand, then walked into the dim morning light. Behind me, a door shut. It was the sound of the closing of a life. I didn't pick up any more passengers that shift. I drove aimlessly lost in thought.

For the rest of that day, I could hardly talk. What if that woman had gotten an angry driver, or one who was impatient to end his shift? What if I had refused to take the run, or had honked once, then driven away?

On a quick review, I don't think that I have done anything more important in my life. We're conditioned to think that our lives revolve around great moments. But great moments often catch us unaware-beautifully wrapped in what others may consider a small one.

Favorite Shorties

An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo. While they waited to get his cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws, a girl in line remarked, "You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!"

Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head. His grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles. When I was a little girl I always wanted freckles," she said while tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles are beautiful!"

The boy looked up. "Really?"

"Of course," said the grandmother. "Why, just name me one thing that's prettier than freckles."

The little boy thought for a moment, peered intensely into his grandmother's face, and softly whispered, "Wrinkles."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A Grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like. "We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods."

The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this in. At last she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

After A While

After a while you learn the subtle difference
between holding hands and chaining a soul

And you learn that love doesn't mean security
and you begin to learn that kisses aren't contracts
and presents aren't promises

And you begin to accept your defeats
with your head up and your eyes open
With the grace of a woman~Not the grief of a child

And you learn to build all your roads on today
because tomorrows ground is too uncertain
and futures have a way of falling down mid-flight

After a while you learn that even sunshine burns if you get too much

So you plant your garden and decorate your own soul
instead of waiting for someone to bring you flowers
and you learn you really can endure

That you really are strong

And you really do have worth

And you learn and learn

With every goodbye you learn

A Grandchild's guide to using Grandpa's computer (Ode to Dr. Seuss)

by Gene Ziegler

(There is an interesting history of this poem at Gene Ziegler's [The Digital Clocktower](#))

Bits. Bytes. Chips. Clocks.
Bits in bytes on chips in box.
Bytes with bits and chips with clocks.
Chips in box on ether-docks.

Chips with bits come. Chips with bytes come.
Chips with bits and bytes and clocks come.

Look, sir. Look, sir. Read the book, sir.
Let's do tricks with bits and bytes, sir.
Let's do tricks with chips and clocks, sir.

First, I'll make a quick trick bit stack.
Then I'll make a quick trick byte stack.
You can make a quick trick chip stack.
You can make a quick trick clock stack.

And here's a new trick on the scene.
Bits in bytes for your machine.
Bytes in words to fill your screen.

Now we come to ticks and tocks, sir.
Try to say this by the clock, sir.

Clocks on chips tick.
Clocks on chips tock.
Eight byte bits tick.
Eight bit bytes tock.
Clocks on chips with eight bit bytes tick
Chips with clocks and eight byte bits tock.

Here's an easy game to play.
Here's an easy thing to say.

If a packet hits a pocket on a socket on a port,
And the bus is interrupted as a very last resort,
And the address of the memory makes your floppy disk abort,
Then the socket packet pocket has an error to report!

If your cursor finds a menu item followed by a dash,
And the double-clicking icon puts your window in the trash,
And your data is corrupted `cause the index doesn't hash,
Then your situation's hopeless and your system's gonna crash.

You can't say this? What a shame, sir!
We'll find you another game, sir.

If the label on the cable on the table at your house
Says the network is connected to the button on your mouse,
But your packets want to tunnel on another protocol,
That's repeatedly rejected by the printer down the hall,
And your screen is all distorted by the side effects of gauss
So your icons in the window are as wavy as a souse,
Then you may as well reboot and go out with a bang,
Cause as sure as I'm a poet, the sucker's gonna hang!

When the copy of your floppy's getting sloppy on the disk,
And the microcode instructions cause unnecessary risk,
Then you have to flash your memory and you'll want to ram your ROM.
Quickly turn off your computer and be sure to tell your mom!

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation.

Every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance.

As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by.

Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it. In his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words.

Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away.

As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone.

Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the real world outside.

He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed.

It faced a blank wall. The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window.

The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall.

She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."