

Crabby Old Lady, or Man

What do you see nurses? What do you see?
What are you thinking? when you're looking at me?
A crabby old lady 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 sock or shoe?
Who, resisting or not lets you do as you will,
When bathing and feeding a long day to fill?
Is that what you're 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 girl 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 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 is beside me to see I don't mourn.
At Fifty, once more, babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children my husband and me.

Dark days are upon me my husband's now 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 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!!

Found by the nursing staff after an old woman passed away in a nursing home in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, Canada. The only thing she had left of any value.

This poem should be on the wall of every nursing home and aged care facility in the country.