

You've Got Mail

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When an old man died in the geriatric ward of a nursing home in Grass Valley, Calif. It was believed that he had nothing left of any value.

Later, when the nurses were going through his meager possessions, they found this poem. Its 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 Missouri.

The old man's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas edition of the News Magazine of the St. Louis Association for Mental Health. A slide presentation has also been made based on his simple, but eloquent, poem.

And this little old man, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this "anonymous" poem winging across the Internet.

Crabby Old Man

What do you see, nurses, what do you see?
What are you thinking when you're looking at me?
A crabby old man, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit with faraway eyes?
Who dribbles his 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,
With bathing and feeding, the 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 child of 10 with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters who love one another.
A young boy of 16 with wings on his feet.
Dreaming that soon now a lover he'll meet.
A groom soon at 20, my heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vows that I promised to keep.
At 25, now, I have young of my own.
Who need me to guide and a secure happy home.
A man of 30, my young now grown fast,

Bound to each other with ties that should last.
At 40, my young sons have grown and are gone,
But my woman's beside me to see I don't mourn.
At 50, once more, babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children, my loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me, my wife is now dead.
I look at the future, 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 man 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 guy 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 man; look closer see ME!

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