

This poem appeared when an old lady died in the geriatric ward of a hospital near Dundee, Scotland. It was felt that she had left nothing of value. Then the nurses, going through her possessions, found this poem.

### **Look Closer, See Me**

What do you see, nurses, what do you see?  
Are you thinking, when you are looking at me,  
A crabbit 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'd try,'  
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,  
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe.

Who, quite unresisting, 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, you're not looking at me.

I'll tell you who I am, as I sit here so still,  
As I move 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 loved one another.

A young girl of 16 with wings on her feet,  
Dreaming that soon a true lover she'll meet;  
Bride now 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 build a secure happy home;  
A woman of 30, my young now grow fast,  
Bound to each other with ties that should last.

At 40 my sons will soon all be gone,  
But my man stays besides 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 husband is dead.  
I look to the future, I shudder with dread,  
For my young are all busy, with 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 it crumbles, grace and vigor depart,  
There is 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 all 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, nurses, open and see,  
Not a crabbit old woman, look closer – see ME.