

Don't Forget that Once I Was Young

Words and Music: Nigel Harbron

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord symbols are placed above the notes. The lyrics are: "When you see me now at the end of my life, Don't forget that once I was young. All the things you do I have done before, All the songs you sing I have sung. So look beyond my vacant eyes and straggling greying hair, And think about the liveliness that once was there."

When you see me now at the end of my life
Don't forget that once I was young.
All the things you do I have done before,
All the songs you sing I have sung.
So look beyond my vacant eyes and straggling greying hair,
And think about the liveliness that once was there.

I know that now you look on me
As a burden and source of fun,
I suppose that this will be the case
Until my life is done.
If only you would take the time to look beyond my mask,
You'd see a different side to me: is that too much to ask?

If I'd thought ahead some years before
Of the way that I might be,
My life I would have taken then -
The final remedy.
But now it's far too late for that for I can hardly lift an arm
Whilst all around me strangers strive to keep me safe from harm.

Old age brings wisdom, so they say,
But I wonder who thought thus.
Had they ever finished up their lives
Needing care, and powerless?
Although you're given food and warmth and offered things to do,
There's one state you won't reach again, and that's just being 'you'.

And when I take my final breath
And can bother you no more.
You'll burn my body or bury it deep,
Your life just as before.
Your memories of me will fade as colour from a dye
But how long will it be before my place you occupy?



This splendid looking lady is Besse Cooper, an American who, at the time of her death in December 2012, was the oldest woman in the world. She died of respiratory failure, hopefully not as a result of having to blow out the 116 candles on her cake. Besse looks surprisingly perky, but it is a sad fact of life - and death - that many people even twenty years her junior are anything like as alert. Ironically, my mother died at the age of 96, and I am not afraid to say that her death came as something of a relief for the family, and, I believe, for her. Although fairly fit physically, her mental capacity had diminished significantly, but not quite to the point where she didn't know what had happened to her (some of the time).

*This song reflects on the way many elderly folk are regarded, but take note of the last line!
Your leatherette armchair awaits you....*