

Growing up

February 2023

Growing Up – Summer In Queens Park – North West London

Our Edwardian house was warm in summer time.
The cold draughts of winter were gone.
The trees in the park opposite were green again
And the birds were in full song.

Even at ages 5, 6 or 7 we children
Now could play in the park,
With trikes, scooters, balls or skipping ropes
After school and supper, until almost dark.

Weekends were special now
As cricket took over – with Mum, the Scorer, keeping the peace,
Dad and uncles played, even little brother taking a bow.
Even the girls were allowed at the crease!

Cricket teas were always great.
Stacks of sandwiches and cake, as much as we could eat.
Food rationing was almost forgotten,
So much to try – such a treat.

After the match ended – hopefully won –
And after a few beers downed –
We made our way home – no cars necessary in London
Everyone used the Underground.

We, exhausted, rode on shoulders,
Sleepy heads drooping, trying to keep awake.
The adults were busy dissecting the match,
Runs scored, wickets taken, perhaps a dropped catch!

Home, bath and bed with windows wide open,
Tunes from the band in the park could be heard –
Such pre-war customs the adults gladly welcomed
And grateful our bomb-damaged home repaired!

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How Old???

So, a senior citizen I've become today
And a good old state pension is on its way.
My legs are achey, my knees aren't even real
And moving too fast just makes me want to squeal.

I'm always forgetting what I'm meaning to do
And don't even mention endless trips to the loo!
Everything takes three times longer than before
It's a real effort just to hobble to the door.

The wrinkles have increased. grey hairs have shown
My waist has expanded, everything has grown.
The eyes are tired and the back ain't too great
In fact my whole body's in a bit of a state.

But my mind is still buzzing, sharp as can be
So who cares that I can't whizz up a tree.
I'm still treading those boards, loving it all
So I'm standing up straight, proud & tall.

This is who I am now - yes I may be sixty-six
But I can still be crazy & get up to some tricks.
My humour won't leave me & I won't do as I'm told
So here's to old age, being brave, being bold.

© Rosemary Brown 2022

Growing Up

Growing up is a subject I know little about,
And that's all because there is no doubt
That however old in reality I get,
I simply haven't grown up yet!

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When I was a Child

I was a child and brought up in the War
I was happy and carefree although we were poor
We had no computer, no car and no phone
We paid for the washer – it wasn't our own

My mum made our clothes, she sewed all our frocks
She knitted dad's socks as he worked on the docks
Dad cycled to work every day – a long way
And we always had fish for our tea every day

I walked all the way to school on my own
It was often quite hard, but we never did moan
I loved it so much – the reading and sums
And we said prayers at the end of the day for our mums

I was chosen to say two poems on a stage
I learned them by heart – it was hard for my age
But i still say them all after 80 long years
And I do hope i will as my 90th appears

Another thing I loved at my school was to run
We ran round two chairs and i thought it great fun
We never had sports clothes, only what we were in
And we picked up our shoes from a big open bin

My sister was born, so now we were two
I loved her so much and I still do
We never had money but were very content
We never had toys, only what we were lent

We never knew different, – we all were the same
We played with our friends and we played our own game
We skipped and we hopped and we played in a den
And it was Chapel on sundays at a quarter to ten

© Anne Platt 2023

For Sarah (on her 21st birthday)

Daughter, daughter, burning bright
 Dead by day, alive by night
 Now an adult?
 No, not quite! is Sarah.

Sails serenely through life
 Avoiding washing up and strife
 Where she goes – amour is rife
 With Sarah.

Boyfriends, boyfriends, by the score
 Sighing, swooning at the door
 Spurned, ignored they come for more
 To Sarah.

(There is a wealthy farmer's son
 Rugged features, full of fun
 For Sarah's parents he's the one
 –but not for Sarah).

But darling daughter, truth to tell,
 This I know, and know full well
 With pride and joy our hearts do swell
 For Sarah.

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From Obscurity to.....

Oh cunning beast of origin obscure
 You crept into my life like water
 Seeping into my solitude;
 Who was the servant, who the master?

Oh faithful beast; did I attribute "WHO"
 To a dumb creature? Your faith can't be
 Like that of a man who hopes to go
 To life hereafter; that's for me.

Oh soulful beast of melting eyes; don't look
 At me like that, with complete trust –
 Forgiving me even as I book
 Your journey to perpetual dust.

Oh noble beast who knew how to disdain
 Those silly people who couldn't look behind
 Those battered features; and thus in vain
 Sought beauty, which was in your mind.

Oh happy beast; I believe you knew
 It was your role to provoke laughter
 In unhappy people. I repeat "WHO"
 Then deserves the life hereafter?

And now your canine race is all run
 I find it no longer becomes me
 To pretend that I'm the only one
 Entitled to immortal memory.

I shall instead continue to pretend
 That after death you are still living –
 I come not to bury but to praise a friend.
 And isn't that the same thing?

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Growing Up

I was born in a village called Ackworth
West Yorkshire is where it is found
It has four distinctly named areas
And it covers a whole lot of ground

There's Brackenhill, Low and High Ackworth
And Moor Top where my parents did rent
Then they bought a house just round the corner
Where the rest of my childhood was spent

When I went to the junior and infants
Along with my twin sister Pat
We'd a thrupence a day sweet ration
We were always most glad of that

Summer holidays we'd spend in the village
Or resorts on the fine Yorkshire coast
Some times we would stay near to Redcar
Of them all I liked Scarboro' the most

My dad was a slow left arm bowler
Sport was quite important to us all
Grammar school involved tennis and hockey
At juniors we played skittle ball

I'm so proud to have been born in Yorkshire
You can see lots of it on TV
And my home village Ackworth is famous
For its public school, cricket and me

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Growing Up

So here i am pondering
 What age are you
 When this occurs?
 Truly I am left wondering;

Was it when my sister turned-up?
 3 ½ years after me,
 And I was tasked with looking after her;

Suddenly, my cousins hadn't come to play with me,
 No the baby was the draw;
 Did she really have right to my Teddy, Dolls and
 My Mummy and Daddy?
 She took everyone's time.

When I was 7 and she 3 ½ Nursery beckoned, part of my school.
 She had a little bed and blanket, for afternoon rest.
 She was so sweet, sometimes I had to wake her,
 Find her shoes and coat so we could go home,
 And her smile, when she saw I had come for her.

Then I knew I was the Grown-Up here,
 As she held my hand, and we walked towards the bus for home:

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The photo album

I've a photo album my mum made for me,
 To capture the path of my very own history.
 It's nothing special, there's no great story here,
 But i look at it now and see a hazy past made more clear.

They're all there, of course, a younger mum and dad,
 My older brother and sisters, the clothes and toys we had.
 I'm playing on a beach with my proud brother in the sand,
 The girls strike a glamorous pose holding each others hand.

Dad fashions our small garden in Gardener's World style,
 Mum's face ages but keeps the familiar smile.
 Trikes become bikes, hair goes from blond to dark brown,
 My childhood shine transforms to a teenage frown.

Holiday snaps take on a somber shade as our race continues to run.
 The three-berth-caravan has no brother or sisters for fun.
 Without them the summers appear a little colder,
 They were there to watch me grow up but i saw them grow older.

Not too many photos, just one small family,
 Mounted on pages you could count easily.
 Not now - it seems every face has a book of its own
 And albums hide in clouds never to be shown.

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Growing Up in Soho

Between the pubs and neon lights
I grew up in Soho's delights
Where streets were wild, and nights were long
And life was one big sing-along
Underneath the street lamps' glow
I'd roam the streets, with nowhere to go
The hustle and bustle, and the noise
Were just a part of life, I had no choice
I look back now, and see the past
The young man I was, and how it would last
Through council work, and designing days
To a quieter life, in Lincolnshire's ways
Like a fish out of water, I've flown
From the city, to a small village known
Woodhall Spa, where I now retire
To live my days, by the village mire
The wildness and excitement, now a distant dream
Replaced by birds and the tranquil stream
I've built a life, and found my peace
In this small town, where my troubles cease
But don't get me wrong, I still miss
The streets of Soho, and the London mist
So every now and then, I'll take a trip
And reminisce about my wild Soho days, with a sip.

AI Bot – Curated by Paul Membrey