

TO BE AN ELDER**By Ione Grover**

**Elderhood is a time for freedom,
to dance, to play, to be.**

**A time to sit back and reflect
and digest and sift.**

**It is a time of wondering
and pondering.**

Did I live enough?

Did I love enough?

Is there still time?

**It is a time to experiment,
to shed old skins
and try on new ones.**

A time of dying and rebirth.

**Do butterflies feel terror
as they feel the tremors
shaking their old cocoons?**

**It is a time to honour my body,
this body which has
endured so much,
stored so much,
a body which has served me well,
but now creaks and moans and shrieks its protest,
a body that asks for kindness.**

**Elderhood is a sensual time,
a time to touch others and be touched,
to see with new eyes,
to listen with new ears,
to smell with a new nose,
to move to the rhythm of the spirit.
It is finally a time to be a lover,
to love passionately and intensely
all the people I meet.
To love this world,
so broken and beautiful.**

**It is a time for feeling,
 when I don't have to hold back my tears,
 when I don't have to hold back my laughter,
when I can even do both at once.
It is a time to be angry
 at what we have done to each other,
 to ourselves and the earth.**

**Elderhood is a time
To search for buried treasure,
to sell all that I have
to find that pearl of great price.
O God, is this possible?
 Can I find this precious jewel
 that has eluded me all my life?
Can the frailties and dreams
 of elderhood
 be the alchemist's fire
which rescues this precious gold
that lies imprisoned,
 embedded,
encased in a baser mould?**

**Elderhood is not a time to prove oneself.
It is not a time to seek perfection
 or achievement
 or worldly goods.
It is a time
to learn new things
and delight in the process,
 not the result.**

**Yet there is a vocation waiting
 for those courageous enough
 to listen,
for those who can ignore
the clamour of voices that say:
 "You're too old.
 It's too late.
 Act your age."**

**This vocation is different.
It is tailored more to the heart
than the intellect.
It beckons
but offers no blueprint.
It captivates the imagination
but defies the mind's logic.
Like Abraham and Sara,
God calls us
to journey to an unknown land.
Can we give birth at our age?
We laugh,
and our laughter brings lightness
to our strange quest.**

**Aging is a spiritual journey,
a pilgrimage,
into uncharted waters.
with no compass or map
to guide us to our journey's end.
All we know for certain is that
Death awaits us.
We must make friends with death
along the way,
And learn the lessons that only she can teach.**