Crabbit Old Woman
(a grumpy old woman)

What do you see, people, what do you see? What are you thinking, when you look at me?
A crabby 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, unresisting 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, you're not looking at me!

I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still, as I rise 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 loved one another,
A young girl of 16 with wings on her feet, dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet,
A bride 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 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 young sons have grown and are gone, but my man is beside me to see I don't mourn.
At 50 once more babies play around my knee; again we know children, my loved one and me.

Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead; I look at the future, I 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 an old woman now and nature is cruel; 'tis her jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body is crumbled, grace and vigor depart. There is now 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 joy, 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 woman -
LOOK CLOSER, SEE ME!

Anonymous