

## OLD AGE IS A GIFT

OLD AGE, I HAVE DECIDED, IS A GIFT. I AM NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, THE PERSON I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE. I WOULD NEVER TRADE MY AMAZING FRIENDS, MY WONDERFUL LIFE, OR MY FAMILY FOR LESS GRAY HAIR OR A FLATTER BELLY. AS I'VE AGED, I'VE BECOME MORE KIND TO MYSELF AND LESS CRITICAL. IT'S A SHAME LIFE IS TOO SHORT. I'VE BECOME MY OWN FRIEND. I HAVE SEEN TOO MANY DEAR FRIENDS LEAVE THIS WORLD HERE IN THE VILLAGE BEFORE THEY UNDERSTOOD THE GREAT FREEDOM THAT COMES WITH AGING.

I STAY UP TIL 2 OR 3 A.M. IN FRONT OF THE TUBE OR TYPING AWAY LIKE I'M DOING RIGHT NOW. I SING TO MYSELF THOSE WONDERFUL SONGS THAT ECHO IN MY MIND, MANY FROM OVER 50 YEARS AGO. I KNOW I AM SOMETIMES FORGETFUL. BUT THERE AGAIN SOME OF LIFE IS JUST AS WELL FORGOTTEN AND I EVENTUALLY REMEMBER THE IMPORTANT THINGS. I AM SO BLESSED TO HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO HAVE MY HAIR TURN GRAY AND HAVE MY YOUTHFUL LAUGHS BE FOREVER ETCHED INTO DEEP GROOVES ON MY FACE. SO MANY HAVE NEVER LAUGHED AND DIED BEFORE THEIR HAIR COULD TURN SILVER.

I CAN SAY "NO" AND MEAN IT. I CAN SAY "YES" AND MEAN IT. AS YOU GET OLDER, IT IS EASIER TO BE POSITIVE. YOU CARE LESS ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK. I DON'T QUESTION MYSELF ANYMORE. I'VE EVEN EARNED THE RIGHT TO BE WRONG! BEING OLD HAS SET ME FREE.

I AM BLESSED TO HAVE BECOME THE PERSON I AM. I AM NOT GOING TO LIVE FOREVER, BUT WHILE I'M STILL HERE, I WILL NOT WASTE TIME LAMENTING WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN, **(ESPECIALLY IN MY CONDITION)** OR WORRYING ABOUT THINGS THAT PROBABLY WILL NEVER HAPPEN. I SHALL EVEN EAT DESSERT ONCE IN AWHILE, MAYBE?

BE A SPENDTHRIFT IN LOVE! LOVE IS THE ONE TREASURE THAT MULTIPLIES BY DIVISION: IT IS THE ONE GIFT THAT GROWS BIGGER THE MORE YOU TAKE FROM IT. IT IS THE ONE BUSINESS IN WHICH IT PAYS TO BE AN ABSOLUTE SPENDTHRIFT; GIVE IT AWAY, THROW IT AWAY, SPLASH IT OVER, EMPTY YOUR POCKETS, SHAKE THE BASKET, TURN THE GLASS UPSIDE DOWN, AND TOMORROW YOU WILL HAVE MORE THAN EVER! **JACK B**