

WORDS ABOUT THIS OLD MAN

By John F. Hall

I spend most of my time writing stories. At the age of 77, I'm not able to do hard labor anymore. A bad back, rheumatoid arthritis, sciatica, a bad foot, and a preponderance of ailments keeps me at home, except for church and meetings with my Christian Fraternity Brothers. I'm currently helping my son by doing finishing work on a house that he is



fixing up to sell. I still mow my one acre lot using a riding lawn mower. I use an electric blower to blow the leaves off my front yard and send them down Dyers Hill Road, when the fall leaves drop to the ground. I may not appreciate how a young man could write a poem about his father without having experienced what it feels like to be old. The young man's name is Dylan Thomas. He wrote the poem before he died at the age of 39. The poem that he wrote is famous and it is called "Do Not Go Gentle Into The Good Night." He knew that his dad was dying, but he wanted his dad to fight for more time to live. My wife, Paula and I watched the latest

James Bond movie called "No Time To Die." It starred Daniel Craig in his fifth and final portrayal of fictional British M16 agent James Bond. He may not have wanted to be type cast, but he did want the latest James Bond film to be his last Bond movie. At 54, Daniel Craig is not young and he is not old. A person is considered to be elderly at the age of 65 years or more.

These are Dylan Thomas' words: "Do not go gentle into that good night, old age should burn and rave at close day; rage, rage against the dying of the light. Though wise men at their end know dark is right, because their words have forked no lightning they do not go gentle into that good night. Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay, rage, rage against the dying of the light. Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, and learn, too late, they grieved it on its way, do not go gentle into that good night. Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, rage, rage against the dying of the light. And you, my father, there on the sad height, curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray. Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Dylan Thomas uses nighttime as a metaphor for death. He could not fully understand his dad's acceptance of death. He used the word "light" to symbolize a will to live and a desire to change the world for the better. As an old writer of 77, I feel the strains of the long life that I have lived. I feel the chronic pain of my joints that are physically decaying. My spinal stenosis is narrowing my spinal column and compressing my spinal cord. The pressure on my sciatic nerve from my lower back through my hip and down my right leg, is causing intense pain. The rheumatoid arthritis in my hands makes it painful to close them. My eyes are slowly failing and I am becoming more forgetful. The two surgeries on my right foot have ended my days of running. And walking, a long distance, is out of the question.

I believe that I might be missed when Christ calls me home. As to when the Good Lord makes that call is out of my hands. I will not rage against the dying of the light.

Like many writers before me, my foot prints are found in the lives that I have touched with my stories. What I started out to do, 44 years ago, was not to seek fame or fortune from my stories. My simplistic purpose was to see if I could help one person with one of my stories. I did not expect to have the three churches in far western Kentucky read my stories, nor did I expect Audrey Lambert to put them on her web page.

Country singer, Alan Jackson wrote the song, "Remember When." These are his lyrics: "Remember when I was young and so were you. And time stood still and love was all we knew. You were the first and so was I. We made love and then you cried. Remember when. Remember when we vowed the vows and walked the walk. Gave our hearts, made the start and it was hard. We lived and learned, life threw curves, there was joy, there was hurt. Remember when. Remember when old ones died and new were born. And life was changed, dissembled, rearranged. We came together, fell apart, and broke each other's hearts. Remember when. Remember when the sound of little feet was music we danced to week to week. Brought back the love, we found trust, vowed we'd never give it up. Remember when. Remember when 30 seemed so old. Now lookin' back, it's just a steppin' stone to where we are, where we've been, said we'd do it all again. Remember when. Remember when we said when we turned gray, when the children grow up and move away, we won't be sad, we'd be glad. For all the life we've had and we'll remember when. Remember when, remember when."

Paula and I have been married for 57 years. We have grown old together in a society that finds our long marriage to be rare. For our 50th wedding anniversary, the Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representative, Gregory Stumbo, mailed us a certificate of congratulations. Sammy Cahan and James Heusen wrote a brief song called "The September of My Years." These are their lyrics: "One day you turn around, and it's summer. Next day you turn around and it's fall. And the springs and winters of a lifetime, what happened to them all? As a man who has always had the wandering ways, now I'm reaching back for yesterdays. 'Til a long forgotten love appears, and I find that I'm sighing softly as I near September. The warm September of my years. As a man who has never paused at wishing wells, now I'm watching children's carousels. And their laughter's music to my ears. And I find that I'm smiling gently as I near September. The warm years of September. The golden, warm years of September of my years.

Linda Grazulis wrote a short piece called "Winning Over Worry." These are some of her words: "Winning over worry takes faith and a complete rest in our dependable Creator who will help us do our best. First we must apply faith in His abiding love... It may be 'yes,' or it may be 'no,' but don't fret, God knows what to send... Second, lean upon His everlasting arms... God can carry all our burdens if we humbly come to Him in prayer. So winning over worry cannot be accomplished all alone; we must look up for that inner peace and often dial our Father's telephone..."

*Read other stories by John F. Hall at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>