

Black Socks

When Father Time knocked on my door,
I had, I thought, a few years more.

Wind-torn the night, dark as a crow,
'Be strong,' he said, 'your turn to go'.

'Wait, wait, there's lots to do,' I said,
'I'd like my loved ones round my bed

And have to phone a priest and friends,
A heart I hurt to make amends.'

He stomped his scythe and glared at me,
'Too late!' he said, 'Let loved ones be!

'Why clutch your wallet, keys and phone?
Even your breath is air on loan.'

I put black socks, my best suit on,
'One thing,' I said, 'before I'm gone.'

'Make haste,' he said, 'I need my sleep,
Eternity is dark and deep.'

'Take, take,' I said, 'my books and clothes,
My creaking joints, my cares and woes,

'But don't,' I said, 'don't take from me,
The days of love and mystery.'

A hearse drew up, a gloved man bowed,
Old Father Time shook out my shroud.

What happened next I'll never know,
The brain goes dark when life lets go.

My eyelids twitched, a jolt, and then
I woke and saw a scythe again.

Seems Time's cold stare is here to stay,
His dirge-dour words press me to pray.

Songs of the heart outlive its fears,
I'm rhyming to you through my cares,

'Cherish, relish, before dreams thin,
The love of friends and Christ and kin.'