

## Growing Old Gracefully

By: Gae Cowley  
*Honorable Mention*

I want to be sure I know the definition of the word “gracefully” so I don’t impart incorrect information to my readers as THEY age. I found I liked the dictionary definition “tastefully” even better than “courteously” and I’ll explain why. As I grow old I feel the necessity to become involved in those actions I have put aside to accommodate others; my family, neighbors, charities, and profession and now believe it is time to make a life for myself that I truly enjoy. That way I won’t be holding a Pity Party for myself every day when my family and others are within hearing. No one wants to know about the things that force me to feel sad for myself because this might frighten them into thinking that old age holds nothing pleasant, and it certainly wouldn’t make me a desirable companion to travel to Alaska with.

I want to write! I want to write stories (beautiful fiction or truth) with sad or strange twists at the end, so I can let my mind have free reign to delve into thoughts I’ve hidden before this time of my life. Now I can let them out without fear of being misinterpreted or disloyal to those involved. I want to tell the funny, serious, tragic, loving events that I promised I would in no way ever reveal. The storytellers are dead now, and I will never admit I didn’t just dream them up.

I can finally reveal the moment my hero, a boy only a year older than I, entered the auditorium balcony when I had been involved in the rehearsal of a play called “Stage Door” in high school, to whirl me around and plant a kiss on my uneducated lips. I can still remember the anger I felt that he hadn’t invited me out on a date before he acted so forward. We never did socialize after that. His obituary in the paper a month ago still touched my heart.

I want the epistles I strive over to be read by critics other than the people who will compliment my efforts whether they mean the flattery or not. I will enter every contest I find advertised in my town or the town I was raised in or those advertised nationally. I won’t stop producing poetry, short stories, or commentaries on politics, which I have felt strongly about for years, even if I don’t win or even place in the competition.

I will hone my skills by classes until I feel satisfied that I’m capable enough to write my autobiography in such a way that my progeny will find it interesting, daring and almost truthful. Now that’s what I call growing old delightfully.