



*The old woman in the nursing home was frail.
She looked like everybody's grandma.*

*She was alone, yet she always seemed preoccupied
With thoughts of years past,
With hope for days to come.*

*No one came to see the old woman.
It didn't seem to matter to anyone -
Not even to her.*

*Her present life focused on the past and the future.
She spent her days reminiscing about times long ago,
She spent her nights thinking about life after death.
The present seemed irrelevant except
As a tool for her reflections.*

*She seemed
Lonely
Lost
Lifeless.*

*As I watched her, I wondered,
Will I end up this way?
What happens when time slows down?
How many hours can we think the same thoughts?
How many days can we relive the same dreams?
How many months can we recreate the same life?
How many years can we be alone?*

*I spoke to the old woman.
"How are you?"
Surprised to have a visitor she smiled.
"Oh, I'm alright.
"Is it Christmas yet?
"When will the children be here
To sing the carols?"*

*How do I tell her
Summer winds still blow,
Christmastime is still far off, and
Months will pass before the children come to sing?
Time stands still for those who are alone.*

*For me, watching someone who is truly alone
Has been a great teacher
Of life lived
Of kindness needed
Of love required.*

*Fear of being alone myself
Helps me to understand the loneliness of others.
And if I understand, I can ease
The loneliness of those for whom
The present is but a bridge
Between what used to be
And what is yet to come.*

Credits:

From *Life Is a Non-Stop Event*, a book of poetry by Carole Bos.

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Easing Loneliness

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