

I, DOROTHY

Growing Old (Un)Gracefully

Dorothy DeMoore

Edited by Guy Wilson

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For Nic: 1958 - 2014

THE BIT ABOUT DOROTHY

For those of you who don't know me my name is Dorothy DeMoore. I like to eat healthily, get to bed at a decent time and I can't stand intolerance. You will find me a reasonable woman but I will not tolerate personal remarks, insensitivity, double entendres and so on. So that's me in a nutshell.

I endeavour to make my artistic output stylish and sophisticated. Personal yet universally meaningful. Purposeful yet entertaining. And, wherever possible, there should be songs. My mother, Emma, came from a very strict family. She was mad about musicals as a girl and, given the opportunity, I believe she could have had a career on the stage. One of the last things she said to me was, 'Give them a show tune and you'll always have friends.' But the closest she got to performing music in public was as a Private in the Salvation Army, rattling a tambourine for money to purge her sins. They were big on sin in those days.

My editor, Mr Wilson, and I wrote the first volume of my biography, *Travels With My Nephew*. We worked so well together that I found myself at the receiving end of his frequent proposals of marriage. 'No, my dear Mr Wilson, I will not marry you,' I said. 'But I will work with you on a stage musical of *Travels With My Nephew*. I will play myself, of course, before Judi Dench hears of the plan. You know what Judi's like. She's an absolute darling but I suspect she has spies everywhere.

Travels With My Nephew, both book and stage musical, were more successful than we'd hoped and Mr Wilson and I went on to develop and perform three small musical revues for he and I to perform together. *Back In Business*, *Little Things* and *Together Forever* were like little candied confections; lovely chatty things with songs, a couple of sentimental sections, a little social engineering and a game thrown in for good measure.

Unfortunately, my darling nephew became very ill with ALS which developed at frightening speed. He died in his husband's arms within the year. Broken hearted, I went off to the Himalayas in search of spiritual renewal and, having decided to retire from public performance, I gave Mr Wilson full permission to rifle through my show-business memorabilia. This book is the first tentative move toward a number of fuller and further reaching community projects.

Kisses from Dorothy XXX

THE BIT ABOUT THE BOOK

Dorothy sees this book principally as a photograph album of some her more memorable performances and other special moments in her public career. The photographs do not appear in chronological order as it is Dorothy's commitment that we do not live our lives in chronological order. She believes that we all have more or less the same human experiences but that they only come to us when we are ready to benefit the most from them.

The texts opposite each picture aim to avoid over sentimentality in obeisance to Dorothy's own feelings: 'Call me cynical but sentiment makes me suspicious.' Nevertheless, the reader might make a connection between the text and the picture it accompanies. The words come from three main sources. There are quotes from notable people and there are quotes from the Desiderata which Dorothy's friend Daisy was forced to recite every year at their childhood Methodist Chapel concert. (See *Travels With My Nephew* for a fuller telling of this story.)

The third and most important collection of quotes is taken from Dorothy's nephew's research paper in preparation for the World Aids Conference in 2010. The paper and the presentation was entitled *Growing Old (Un)Gracefully* and it deals with the ongoing challenges facing those of us who are growing older with HIV. The 2010 research data, though aging like its subjects, is still relevant and is often repeated in more recent research and reports. The difficulties seem to be in getting the required actions up on their feet.

For myself, this book has been a labour of love produced in partnership with Dorothy as a tribute to a wonderful man and his exclusively wonderful Aunt Dorothy who was always there for him and still doesn't quite know how to get started with the next stage of her life. Her strength and determination are inspirational and I'm sure it won't be too long before she is dictating the next volume of her biography *The Importance of Being Dorothy* to me.

Guy Wilson

‘Case Management’ may offer some solutions for chronic disease care, but does little to address the specific issues of aging HIV+ gay men.

Growing Old (Un)Gracefully



A man that is young in years may be
old in hours, if he has lost no time.

Francis Bacon,



All social minorities heavily burdened with HIV should feel motivated to take an active part in placing HIV and the aging process onto the political agenda.

Growing Old (Un)Gracefully



Although co-morbidity is relatively commonplace in the general population over the age of 65, it is becoming increasingly clear that HIV+ gay men are being confronted with multiple chronic diseases from the age of 50 onwards.

Growing Old (Un)Gracefully



And in the end, it's not the years in
your life that count. It's the life in your
years.

Abraham Lincoln.



Any refashioning and redesign of services needs to focus on empowering older patients to live a life with HIV. Rather than providing for the patients, services need to work with the patient. Clinical services are already focused on helping the patient live with HIV but very often the supporting specialist services are working to older models of care and treatment.

Growing Old (Un)Gracefully



As far as possible without surrender be
on good terms with all persons.

Desiderata.

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