

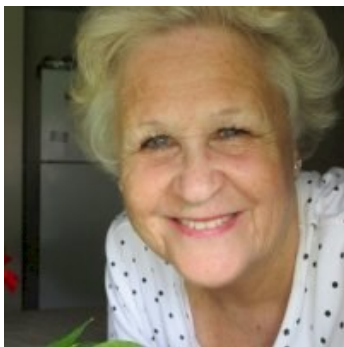
## LOVE, AND THY SHALL BE LOVED...

Dear reader,

February is a special month with significance touching the secular, romantic, and spiritual realms. First, it is the shortest month of the year. This year's span is 29 days. Also, Valentine's Day falls on the 14th of this month. Most of us will forget this romantic day until it is upon us a week or two before the 14th; remembering just in time to send chocolates, roses and cards filled with human expressions of love and devotion to our true loves.

However, the deepest expression of love is to love the people you are responsible for. The people that have trusted us with their care and well-being.

I want to share with you a poem that I read recently, a poem about fear, and awareness. Written by the very talented Pat A. Fleming.



Will I slowly wither like a leaf  
That falls upon the earth?  
Once void of all its Autumn hues,  
It loses all its worth.

Will my strength and vigour for this life  
Just one day start to wane?  
Will all these lines and wrinkles guise  
My once familiar face?

Will I feel no longer needed  
By my family and my friends?  
Will that thrill of feeling deep in love,  
In time come to an end?

Will I lose my sense of purpose,  
My reason for each day?

Will my mind grow dull and cluttered  
Till I somehow lose my way?

Will I outlive all my loved ones  
And find myself alone?  
Will I lose my independence,  
My possessions and my home?

Will all my fondest memories  
Escape my aging grasp?  
And will I drift so far away  
I never make it back?

Will I be that old forgotten soul  
That no one comes to see?  
Kept in the hands of strangers,  
A shell of who I used to be.

I pray I'm spared such cruelty,  
For if I am to live.  
I don't want to be a burden  
When I still have much to give.

I want to treasure every moment,  
Every love my heart embraced.  
I need to know each pain I felt,  
Each tragedy I faced.

So if someday I disappear  
Before I leave this life,  
I beg you to reach out to me  
And hold on with all your might.

For despite how far away I go,  
I need the world to care.  
For somewhere in that bewilderment,  
I still linger there.

Getting old is not for the faint hearted. Many of your residents will have lost or been separated from their loved ones. On this valentine's day please reach out to the vulnerable and lonely.

Have the spirit of love in your heart in all that you do and say.

*Priscilla Holmes*

