YOU ARE OLD
FATHER WILLIAM

by

Lewis Carroll
after Robert Southey

with Tenniel's famous illustrations

and a forward by the Rt. Hon. Lord Charles Augustus Fortescue

A Kiddy Klassik Poetry Special
The author’s famous photographic self-portrait.
Lewis Carroll's

You Are Old
Father William
A Parody
humorously adapted by him from
“The Old Man’s Comforts and How He Gained Them”
by Robert Southey

with the original illustrations by
Sir John Tenniel

De luxe Centennial Edition
newly edited by
Q. Wykke-Bucke M.BSt

with a forward by the Rt. Hon. Lord Charles Augustus Fortescue

A Kiddy Klassik Poetry Special

in association with the Quidnunc Trust

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The Quidnunc Trust is a non-profit organisation which exists to challenge inter-generational stereotypes in literature, the arts and the media.

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Lewis Carroll’s

Father William

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Foreword

by the Rt. Hon. Lord Charles Augustus Fortescue

I like this poem because its short and has ryming bits and funny pictures and you should buy it.

- Charlie A.F.
“You are old, Father William,” the young man said, 
    “And your hair has become very white; 
    And yet you incessantly stand on your head - 
    Do you think, at your age, it is right?”

* *

“In my youth,” Father William replied to his son, 
    “I feared it might injure the brain; 
    But now I am perfectly sure I have none, 
    Why, I do it again and again.”

“You are old,” said the youth, “as I mentioned before, 
    And have grown most uncommonly fat, 
    Yet you turned a back somersault in at the door - 
    Pray, what is the reason of that?”

* *

“In my youth,” said the sage, as he shook his gray locks, 
    “I kept all my limbs very supple 
    By the use of this ointment - one shilling the box - 
    Allow me to sell you a couple.”

---

1 This poem is a clever parody of Robert Southey’s poem “The Old Man’s Comforts and How He Gained Them”, first published in 1799.
"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
   For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose with the bones and the beak -
   Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

*  
"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
   And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
   Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
   That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose -
   What made you so awfully clever?"

*
"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,”
Said his father, “don’t give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I’ll kick you downstairs!”

Just Kidding
2003
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Charles Lutwidge Dodgson’s multi-faceted mid-Victorian opus “Father William” offers a seminal and ground-breaking study of the psychology of the ageing process, as represented in the darkly humorous persona of the Father figure, by turns inviting and threatening - a refusal of closure which strangely anticipates the work of P.L. Travers, J.M. Barrie and George Orwell. Its critical position in the author’s “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” is thought by many to foreground the ambiguity of the author’s own personae, in terms of which the frolicsome playmate projected under the name “Lewis Carroll” coexists in perpetual conflict with the grim logician and author of “An elementary treatise on determinants : with their application to simultaneous linear equations and algebraical geometry” and “Suggestions as to the Election of Proctors”. Each acts as a subtext undermining the other’s authenticity, and thus inexorably generating the nightmare instability to which the author will condemn the child – a child whom he calls Alice, but who is also a vicarious victim offered in a futile gesture to the unbearable exigencies of adulthood and actuality.

The late Quentin Wykke-Bucke (1952-2005) was internationally renowned for his remarkable achievement in building a long and prestigious career on spirally self-referential re-readings of well-known popular texts as an authentic expression of the fluctuating nexus of cultural imperatives that surreptitiously remap the multifaceted schematism of academic funding.