

## SHE'LL BE 99 TOMORROW

She sat, grimacing but making no sound  
as harried staff bustled around.  
She stiffened slightly,  
her hands fluttered, lightly  
resting on her lap, knuckles whitened  
as she felt more pain, but she is frightened  
because she doesn't want to be a bother.

She lay, willing herself to sleep.  
Frown lines from the pain running deep  
over her beautiful ageing face  
and she wishes she is any place  
but here, where she feels so alone.  
She winces and muffles her groan  
because she doesn't want to be a bother.

She wakes with the sunrise  
and wipes away the hot tears that fill her eyes.  
The thought of another long day  
in this place, with its lingering scent of decay  
fills her heart with despair  
and she wants someone, anyone, to care  
but she doesn't want to be a bother.

Later, when the pain is at its worst, she calls  
for help, and waits, staring at the walls  
of her room, willing someone to come and praying for an end  
to this suffering. She does not want to depend  
on staff who do not have time to give her  
the care that she needs. Her lips quiver ...  
because she doesn't want to be a bother.

So she continues to wait. As the morning grows bright  
she daydreams of her 99<sup>th</sup> birthday – who could she invite?  
A fleeting smile turns into a sob, because she knows  
there is no one. And the pain in her chest grows.  
She bites her lip as she feels the pain consume  
her – she closes her eyes and dies alone in her room  
because she didn't want to be a bother.