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Lest Old Age Be Wasted on the Old

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Lest old age be wasted on the old

by Art Sullivan

*In his lair, thought the lion, as he searched it all through
That is where I will find the one thing that will do.
And that is ... on the tip of his tongue sat the name,
And he could not recall it but tried just the same.*

*So for now let me think of the things that I know
All about it: To bring to my mind where to go.
It is measured and counted, conserved, sold and bought;
It is hoarded and wasted, and used without thought.*

*'Tis expended as freely as grass on a plain
And used with a passion when there's aught to gain.
A woman without it: her looks are diminished
But with it a man is a man, or he's finished.*

*Comes expensive and free, comes bought or as gift
Yet unfaithfully gives its possessor a lift.
Under pressure it bursts, like a flame from the wood,
But when none is applied, its effects are as good.*

*Though it has not a color, neither taste nor a smell
And to measure its mass comes to nothing as well;
Not a gas nor a liquid nor plasma its state
But its presence can markedly alter a weight.*

*It is famous and very well known for its deeds
It is loved and it's hated, depending on needs.
It is feared in the raw, but still used in that state
And it's clear when it's present, come early or late.*

*Though it's sought and desired like passionate fire
Just as often it's left just to sit and expire.
When it's gone, then that's death, this is true, so they say
Even though some may be back the very next day.*

*Well much more to be pitied, 'tis not loved for itself
But it's for what it does it's not left on the shelf.
When old age has arrived, it's the fountain of youth
And to use it in words is, generally, uncouth.*

*The profligate user's both feared and admired,
The effect more pronounced when the user is tired.
It's known to give victory anon to a hack
Unless it is saved to ensure safe trip back.*

*To the Greeks ἐνέργεια, énergie to the French
(Since they do not use vim, vigor, zip, push or wrench).
I have found energy, (with relief) said the lion
Now there's nothing I want that I can't rule as mine.*