

**Novice**  
**by Emily Ross**

I've always tried to handle what nature sent my way  
With fortitude and grace, as we've been told.  
But nothing has conditioned me for what I face today;  
The trouble is, I'm new at being old.

Countless fresh indignities confront me every day,  
And burgeoning infirmities unfold.

This is my agenda: get accustomed to the way  
Life mistreats you, when you're new at being old.

There is no dress rehearsal for the part you're called to  
play;

You get dumped straight into the action, cold.  
And there's no consideration in the reviews next day  
Of the fact that you are new at being old.

Sometimes I idly wonder, will there ever come a day  
When the mirror will no further horrors hold;  
When I no longer startle at the wrinkles and the gray;  
When I'm no longer new at being old?