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Upon Reaching Forty

William A. Graham

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Upon Reaching Forty

William A. Graham

There comes in everyone's life a time you can't deny.
The peak's been passed, you realize with a sigh;
Your eyes are out of focus; your ears no longer hear;
The body slowly functions; you're past that fortieth year.

Now, your life will be a long slow decline.
You've passed that waystation of "holding thirty-nine."
Rheumatism and arthritis, their coming is so near;
It's all downhill from now on; you're past that fortieth year.

The teeth may come out; the hair may turn gray.
The spirit remains young. This we'll always say,
"Bring on them young women! Give us another beer!
We'll not be bothered upon passing our fortieth year."

Interview with **Michael Crawford**, DEAN OF FINE ARTS.

QUESTION: HOW DO YOU TEACH FINE ART?

"MUSIC IS MY BACKGROUND BUT IT ISN'T ANY DIFFERENT THAN ANY OF THE FINE ARTS. WE [PERFORMERS] HAVE A DEEP-SEATED NEED TO SHARE WHAT WE DO WITH OTHER PEOPLE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE WE PERFORM... WE HAVE A BURNING DESIRE TO PRESENT OUR CRAFT TO THE PEOPLE – WHETHER WE ARE DESIGNERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, ARTISTS, OR ANY PERFORMER. BUT THERE IS NO QUICK WAY; THE [STUDENTS] HAVE TO STICK TO IT. YOU CAN BUY A VERY INEXPENSIVE ELECTRONIC PIANO, BUT YOU STILL HAVE TO TRAIN YOUR MIND AND MUSCLES TO PLAY. OR THERE ARE QUICK-DRAW ART BOOKS, BUT YOU STILL NEED TO KNOW COLOR THEORY. THE MOZARTS OF THE WORLD ARE VERY FEW; THE REST OF US WHO ASPIRE TO BE ARTISTS HAVE TO PLOD ALONG.

WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT CREATIVE ARTS CAN BE A LIFE-LONG PURSUIT. YOU CAN TAKE PIANO LESSONS AT 59; YOU MAY NOT BECOME A GREAT PIANIST, BUT YOU CAN LEARN ENOUGH TO REALLY ENJOY IT. I FOUND IN MY CAREER [THAT] THE MORE I KNOW ABOUT MUSIC, THE MORE I STUDY, [THE MORE] I REALIZE [HOW LITTLE I KNOW]."