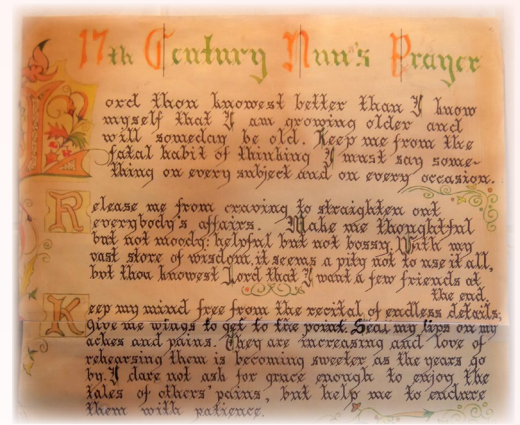


## 17<sup>th</sup> century nun's prayer



Lord, Thou knowest better than I know myself  
that I am growing older and will some day be old.  
Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say  
something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.  
Make me thoughtful, but not moody: helpful but not bossy.  
With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all,  
but Thou knowest Lord that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details,  
give me wings to get to the point.  
Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing  
and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter, as the years go by.  
I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pains,  
but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility  
and a lessening cocksureness when my memory  
seems to clash with the memories of others.  
Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet: I do not want to be a Saint,  
- some are so hard to live with -  
but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places,  
and talents in unexpected people and give me Oh Lord,  
the ordinary grace to tell them so.

*Anonymous, found on the wall of the bathroom  
of a friend in Reeuwijk, near Gouda, Holland  
Elfinn*