

As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII [All the world's a stage]
William Shakespeare - 1564-1616

Jaques to Duke Senior

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
Then the whining schoolboy, with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances;

And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side;
His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank, and his big manly voice,
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

On Aging

“When you see me sitting quietly, like a sack upon a shelf,

Don’t think I need your chattering. I’m listening to myself.

Hold! Stop! Don’t pity me! Hold! Stop your sympathy!

Understanding if you got it, otherwise I’ll do without it!

When my bones are stiff and aching and my feet won’t climb the stair,

I will only ask one favor: Don’t bring me no rocking chair.

When you see me walking, stumbling, don’t study and get it wrong.

‘Cause tired don’t mean lazy and every goodbye ain’t gone.

I’m the same person I was back then, a little less hair, a little less chin,

A lot less lungs and much less wind.

But ain’t I lucky I can still breathe in.”

– Maya Angelou - 1928-2014

Read both poems and determine a common theme between them. Once you’ve found that common theme, write a paragraph analyzing how each poem approaches said theme. You can either focus on how the two poems take a similar approach or how the two poems take a different approach. In order to do the above, make sure to identify one literary device that each poem uses.