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# The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

By Eric Roth

What are you looking at, Caroline?

-The wind, mom.

They say a hurricane is coming.

I feel like I'm on a boat...

drifting.

Can I do anything for you, mom?

Make anything easier?

Oh, sugar. There is

nothing left to do.

It is what it is.

I'm finding it harder

to keep my eyes open.

My mouth's full of... cotton.

There, there, miss Daisy.

You will scratch yourself to ribbons.

Do you want any more

medication, mother?

Doctor said you can

have as much as you want.

No need for anybody to suffer.

A friend told me that...

she never had a chance to say

goodbye to her mother.

I wanted to tell you...

how much I'm gonna miss you.

Mom.

Oh, Caroline.

Are you afraid?

-I'm curious.

What comes next...

They built that train

station in 1918.

Our father was there

the day it opened.

He said that...

a tuba band was playing.

They had the finest clockmaker

in all of the South

to build that glorious clock.

His name was

Mr Gateau.

Mr Cake.

He was married to a Creole

of Evangeline Parish

and they had a son.  
Mr Gateau was from birth  
absolutely blind.  
When their son was old enough,  
he joined the army.  
They prayed God would keep him  
out of harm's way.  
For months, he did nothing  
but work on that clock.  
One day a letter came.  
Mr Gateau, done for the night,  
went up alone to bed.  
And their son came home.  
They burried him  
in a family plot  
where he would be with them  
when their time came.  
Mr Cake worked on his clock,  
laboring to finish.  
It was a morning to remember.  
Papa said there were  
people everywhere.  
Even Teddy Roosevelt came.  
It's running backwards!  
I made it that way.  
So that perhaps the boys  
that we lost in a war  
might stand and  
come home again.  
Home to farm,  
work,  
have children,  
to live long, full lives.  
Perhaps my own son  
might come home again.  
I'm sorry if I offended anybody.  
I hope you enjoy my clock.  
Mr Cake was never seen again.  
Some say he died  
of a broken heart.  
Some say he went to sea...  
Excuse me, do you mind  
if I make a call?  
Somebody's watching

my little boy. -Sure.  
I hope I haven't  
disappointed you.  
You couldn't disappoint me.  
Well, I...  
I know I don't have much  
to show for myself.  
The suitcase.  
There's a diary.  
This?  
Could you read it to me, dear?  
-Is this what you wanna do?  
I tried to read it a hundred  
different times...  
Mom, it's not exactly...  
Just the sound of  
your voice, darling.  
It's dated "April 4th, 1985."  
It says, "New Orleans."  
This is my last will  
and testament.  
I don't have much to leave,  
few possessions, no money really.  
I will go out of this world  
the same way I came in,  
alone and with nothing.  
All I have is my story.  
I'm writing it now  
while I still remember it.  
My name is Benjamin.  
Benjamin Button.  
And I was born under  
unusual circumstances.  
The first world war had ended.  
I've been told it was an  
especially good night to be born.  
We won the war!  
What are you doing here?  
-Thomas...  
I'm afraid she's gonna die.  
-What?  
That's enough! All of you!  
Get away from her!  
I came as quickly as I could.

The streets are filled with people.  
Thomas, promise me  
he has a place...  
Yeah.  
She gave her life for me.  
And for that,  
I am forever grateful.  
Mr Button...!  
Thomas!  
Thomas, wait!  
Hey, what are you doing there!?  
What do you have there?  
The air is sweet.  
You look very handsome  
tonigh, miss Queenie.  
Handsome as I ever seen you.  
The brown matches your eyes.  
-Oh, hush!  
You ain't no slouch yourself.  
Hambert's back in town.  
He came home legless...  
but he home... I know you was  
sweet on him one time...  
Sweeter than I shoulda been...  
-Miss Simone messed herself.  
Sweet Jesus! She got to stop  
doing that, or it's diapers for her.  
-I'll be right there!  
-C'mon, it's awful nice out here.  
Come out back for a moment,  
take your mind off things.  
What in God's name...!?  
Oh, the Lord done  
something here...!  
I hope I didn't hurt it none,  
steppin' on it like that.  
We best leave that for  
the police. -Oh, baby.  
I'll go.  
It's for sure nobody wanted  
to keep it. Come on, baby.  
Quennie!  
-Hold your water!  
I'll be back.

She went and messed  
herself all over again...  
Jane Childress, start her a bath.  
And mind your own  
business, Mrs Duprey.  
You'll be messing yourself  
soon enough.  
Somebody stole my necklace.  
OK, Mrs Hollister, I'll be right  
with you. Go on back upstairs.  
You are as ugly as an old pot,  
but you still a child of God.  
Queenie, she won't go  
take a bath without you.  
Mercy... I'll be right there!  
You just wait right  
here for me, okay?  
My sister gave me those pearls.  
I can't find them anywhere.  
Somebody's been  
stealing my jewelry.  
They are right here,  
Mrs Hollister. See?  
Right around your pretty  
white neck. Now come on.  
Your heart is strong. You want  
to avoid any undue stimulation.  
I trust you ladies will  
help me out with that?  
I've never seen anything like it,  
nearly blind from cataracts.  
I'm not sure if he can hear,  
bones indicate severe arthritis.  
His skin has lost all elasticity  
and his hands and feet are ossified.  
He shows all the deterioration,  
the infirmities not of  
a newborn, but of a man  
well in his eighties on his way  
to the grave. -He's dying?  
His body's failing him  
before his life's begun.  
Where did he come from?  
-It's my sister's child.

From Lafayette. She had  
an unfortunate adventure.  
Poor child, he got the worse of it.  
Come out white.  
There are places for 'unwanted'  
babies like these, Queenie.  
No room for another  
mouth to feed here.  
The Nolan Foundation,  
despite their good intentions,  
thinks this place is a large  
nuisance as it is. A baby...  
You said he don't have long.  
Queenie, some creatures  
aren't meant to survive.  
No, this baby here is a  
miracle, that's for certain.  
Just not the kind of miracle  
one hopes to see.  
Now listen! Listen up here!  
We gonna have us a visitor  
that's gonna be staying  
with us for a little while.  
My sister had a child, but she  
couldn't see right by it. So...  
He's known as...  
Benjamin.  
Benjamin...  
He's not a well child,  
so we're gonna have to  
take good care of him.  
I had ten children, there's  
not a baby I can't care for.  
Let me see him.  
Oh, God in heaven, he looks  
just like my ex husband.  
Look, he's prematurely old.  
Doctor Rose said he ain't got  
much more time on this earth.  
Join the club.  
Oh, smile!  
Hambert sends his  
remembrances to you.  
Are you right out of your mind?

I know you ain't got all the parts  
it takes to make one of your own,  
but this ain't yours to keep,  
it may not even be human kind.

Mr Weathers, come back here!

Please.

"You never know  
what's comin' for you."

It seemed I'd found a home.

Is any of this true?

You have such a lovely voice.

Mom, there's an ancient  
streetcar token.

That clock just kept going,  
year after year after year...

I didn't know I was a child.

-Same old crap every day.

I thought I was like  
everyone else there.

An old man in a  
twilight of his life.

Stop bangin' that fork. It's used  
for eating, not for playin' with.

And use your napkin,  
please Mr. Benjamin.

Queenie!

Hey, boy!

I always had a healthy curiosity.

What was up the street,  
or around the next corner?

Benjamin! That is dangerous.

Come back over here!

Stay put, child!

I loved her very much.

She was my mother.

Momma... momma!

Some days I feel different  
than the day before.

Everybody feels different about  
themselves one way or another.

But we're all goin' the same way.

Just taking different roads  
to get there, that's all.

You're on your own road,



Benjamin.  
Momma, how much longer I got?  
Just be thankful for  
what you're given.  
You already here longer  
than you supposed to.  
Some nights,  
I'd have to sleep alone.  
I didn't mind. I would listen  
to the house breathing.  
All those people sleeping.  
I felt safe.  
It was a place of great routine.  
Every morning at 5:30  
no matter the weather,  
General Winslow, US army  
retired, raised the flag.  
Mrs Sybil Wagner, once an  
opera singer of some note,  
well, she sang Wagner.  
Alright, c'mon.  
We gotta put some life into  
these old sticks for you.  
get you walkin'.  
No matter the season, supper  
was served promptly at 5:30.  
Mol-asses...  
-Molasses.  
Molasses.  
I learned to read  
when I was five.  
My grandfather was  
a dresser for a famous actor.  
He brought home every  
play for me to read.  
"Kind keepers of my  
weak decaying age  
let dying Mortimer  
here rest himself.  
Even like a man new  
haled from the rack.  
So fare my limbs with  
long imprisonment.  
And these gray locks,

the pursuivants of death,  
argue the end of  
Edmund Mortimer."  
You thought I was  
plain ignorant, didn't you?  
The actor my grandfather worked  
for was John Wilkes Booth.  
He killed Abraham Lincoln.  
You never know  
what's coming for you.  
On saturday nights, momma  
would make me go to church.  
Benjamin!  
Amen!  
What can I do for you, sister?  
Her parts are all  
twisted up inside,  
she can't have little children.  
Lord, if you could see clear  
to forgive this woman her sins  
so she can bear  
the fruit of the womb.  
Out damnable affliction!  
Praise God!  
Hallelujah!  
And what's this old  
man's irrediction?  
He's got the devil on his back,  
trying to ride him into  
the grave before his time.  
Out, Zebuchar!  
Out, Beelzebub!  
How old are you?  
Seven, but I look a lot older.  
God bless you.  
He's seven!  
Now, this is a man with  
optimism in his heart!  
Belief in his soul!  
We are all children  
in the eyes of God!  
We are gonna get you  
out of that chair.  
And we're gonna have you walk.

-It's all right.  
In the name of God's glory,  
rise up!  
Come on!  
Come on, man!  
Now God is gonna see you  
the rest of the way.  
He's gonna see this  
little old man walk  
without the use of  
a crutch or a cane.  
He's gonna see that you walk from  
faith and divine inspiration alone!  
Now walk.  
Don't touch him!  
Rise up, old man!  
Rise up like Lazarus!  
I said rise up!  
Yes!  
Say hallelujah!  
Walk. Walk on.  
Now, when I look back on it,  
it was miraculous.  
But you know the saying:  
"The Lord giveth and  
the Lord taketh away."  
Praise be to the Lord  
on the highest...!  
There was so many birthdays.  
So we wouldn't run out,  
we would spare the candles.  
You know I don't like birthdays  
and I don't like cake.  
And death was a common visitor.  
People came and went.  
You always knew  
when someone left us.  
There was a silence in the house.  
It was a wonderful  
place to grow up.  
I was with people who had shed all  
the inconsequences of earlier life.  
Left wondering  
about the weather,

the temperature of a bath,  
the light at the end of the day.  
For everyone that died, someone  
would come to take their place.  
I've been married five times.  
My first wife and I are captured  
by neighbor tribe of cannibals.  
We escaped across the river.  
My wife, she can't swim,  
so, sadly, she eaten.  
My second wife steps  
on a cobra and dies.  
It was very bad luck  
to be married to me.  
That's Mr Oti. He's an acquaintance  
of an acquaintance of mine.  
The next summer I'm captured...  
-He's a pigmey.  
...with six others  
by Baschiele tribe.  
They trade us for pigs,  
shoes and beer  
to a very strange  
american man.  
I hear you're not so old  
as you looking.  
You just foolin' everybody.  
What's the matter,  
did you get Madjembe?  
What's madjembe?  
-Worms.  
I don't think I have worms.  
This is just how I am.  
Come, let's get a cold root beer.  
I found medication  
under your pillow.  
I'm not supposed to.  
It's dangerous.  
Who said that?  
Come on, little man.  
Hurry up.  
Halt, please!  
Then I am in the monkey house  
at Philadelphia Zoological Park.

Three thousand people  
show up my first day.  
Look.  
What's it like living  
in a cage? -It stinks.  
But the monkeys,  
they do some tricks there.  
I throw a spear...  
wrestle with Kowali,  
she is orangutan.  
When I'm not playing  
with the monkeys,  
they want me to run to the bars  
in my cage, with my teeth.  
So then what did you do?  
-Then I leave ZOO.  
Go here, go there,  
wander most of the time.  
You were all alone?  
-Plenty of time you'd be alone.  
When you're different like us,  
it's gonna be that way.  
But I tell you a little secret.  
Fat people, skinny people,  
tall people, white people...  
they're just as alone as we are.  
But they are scared shitless.  
I think about the river  
I grew up on.  
It would be nice to sit  
by my river again.  
Come. I have an appointment.  
There's my little man.  
You ready, sugar?  
Always ready.  
Always ready.  
Filamena, mr Benjamin.  
It's a pleasure to meet you, sir.  
-My pleasure, ma'am.  
You can find your own  
way home, can't you?  
Take the St. Charles  
line to Napoleon.  
Where in God's name

have you been? Get in here!  
You're goin' to take my breath  
away, you know that?  
Oh Lord, I was so  
worried about you.  
It had been the best  
day of my life.  
How's her breathing?  
-Shallow.  
They're sayin' it will  
reach us in few hours.  
I gotta get my baby  
and take him to my sister's.  
They say there's nothin' to worry  
about here in the hospital.  
Nurses will be right here if you  
need them. Are you okay?  
Yeah, I'm okay, reading...  
I shouldn't be more  
than an hour.  
Was there just company?  
It was just Dorothy leaving.  
Go on, Caroline.  
On Sundays, the families  
would come and visit.  
It was Thanksgiving, 1930.  
I met the person who  
changed my life forever.  
Well, Benjamin...  
Might I say you are looking  
strikingly youthful.  
Good day, Mrs Fuller.  
A single cane,  
back straight as an arrow...  
What elixir have  
you been drinking?  
-Thank you, Ma'am.  
-Grandma, look at me!  
That was really something!  
Come on over here, you.  
This is my granddaughter Daisy.  
This is mister...  
I'm afraid, Benjamin, I don't  
rightly know your last name.

Benjamin is fine.  
I never forgot her blue eyes.  
Good people, supper is served.  
Did you know turkeys  
aren't really birds?  
-Why do you say that?  
-They're in the pheasant family.  
They can hardly fly. Sad, don't  
you think? Birds that can't fly.  
I like birds that can't fly.  
They are so delicious.  
-That's cruel.  
-I have something to tell you all.  
While we're giving thanks  
for God's blessings...  
I've had a miracle happen.  
The Lord saw fit to  
answer my prayers.  
What does she mean  
"answers her prayers"?  
She's gonna have a baby, silly.  
That's what my momma said when  
I was gonna have a baby brother.  
But he didn't live long.  
Cause he didn't breathe right.  
...when he got his  
beautiful hind legs  
just as big God Ngog  
had promised.  
You can see that  
it's five o'clock,  
because big God  
Ngog's clock says so.  
Isn't that something?  
-Again. Read it again.  
-Read it again, please.  
Alright. But afterwards,  
you must go to bed.  
I promise.  
Old Man Kangaroo...  
Are you sleeping?  
-Who is that?  
-It's me, Daisy.  
-Hi!

-Come on!  
Where are we going?  
-Come on. Right in here.  
Here, you light it. -I'm not  
supposed to play with matches.  
Don 't be a chicken.  
Light it!  
I'll tell you a secret if  
you'll tell me one. -Okay.  
I saw my momma  
kissing another man.  
Her face was red from it.  
Your turn.  
I'm not as old as I look.  
-I thought so.  
You don't seem like an old  
person. Like my grandma.  
-I'm not.  
-Are you sick?  
Well, I heard momma  
and Tizzy whisper  
and they said I was  
gonna die soon.  
But maybe not.  
You're odd.  
You're different than  
anybody I've ever met.  
May I? -Okay.  
What are you doing  
under there?  
You come right out here  
and get back up to bed.  
It's after midnight!  
You are not to be playing  
together. -Yes, ma'am.  
Not many people experience that.  
You want me to go on?  
What about your friend?  
The tall lady?  
We're not friends anymore.  
That's what happens with  
tall people sometimes.  
Well... goodbye.  
I spent a lot of time



by myself that year.

Hello?

-Hi. -I'm moving in today.

Welcome. We've been  
expecting you.

Can you please show her up  
to Mrs Rousseau's old room?

I'm sorry, but we usually  
don't allow dogs in the house.

Well, she's old as the hills,  
she's almost blind.

She won't be a  
bother much longer.

Well, alright, as long as she  
stays out from underfoot.

As hard as I try,

I can't remember her name.

Mrs Lawson, or Mrs Hartford,  
or maybe it was Maple?

It's funny how sometimes the  
people we remember the least  
make the greatest  
impression on us.

I do remember  
she wore diamonds.

And she always dressed in fine  
clothing as if she's going out.

Although she never did and  
nobody ever came to visit her.

She taught me  
to play the piano.

It's not about  
how well you play,  
it's how you feel about  
what you're playing.

Try this.

You cannot help but put  
yourself into the music.

There were many changes. Some  
you could see, some you couldn't.

Hair started growing  
in all sorts of places.

Along with other things.

I felt pretty good, considering.

Oh, darlin', the pain.  
-Alright mom, I'll get the nurse.  
Look at this eye.  
This is a major hurricane.  
Not doing too good?  
Nobody seems to know  
whether to stay or leave.  
I'm gonna ride it out.  
There, that should make  
things much easier.  
Have you had a chance  
to say your goodbyes?  
My father waited 4 hours for my  
brother to get here from Boger City.  
Couldn't go without him.  
She seems like a sweet woman.  
-Yeah.  
I haven't had as much time  
with her... -Are you busy?  
-Excuse me.  
-Sure.  
Queenie would let me go with  
Mr Daws to Poverty Point,  
to watch the boats go  
up and down the river.  
These were hard times.  
Did I ever tell you I was struck  
by lightning seven times?  
Once when I was in the field  
just tending to my cows.  
My fourt' hand didn't show up.  
Anybody wanna make 2 \$  
for a day's work around here?  
What's the matter?  
Nobody wants to do an honest day's  
work for an honest day's pay?  
He never pays.  
Nobody wants the job?  
-I do.  
You got your sea legs, old man?  
I think.  
That's good enough for me.  
Get your ass on board,  
we'll sure as hell find out!

I was as happy as I could be.  
-I need a volunteer!  
I would do anything.  
-Yes, captain!  
-Scrape off all this bird shit.  
-Right away, sir.  
I was actually goin' to be paid for  
something I would've done for free.  
His name was  
captain Mike Clark.  
He'd been on a tugboat  
since he was seven.  
Get movin'!  
Come here.  
Could you... still get it up?  
I do every morning.  
The old pole? The hard'n?  
I guess.  
When was the last time  
you had a woman?  
Never. -Never?  
Not that I know of, sir.  
Wait a minute!  
You mean to say, you've been on  
this earth for how many years,  
and you never had a woman?  
Damn! That's the saddest  
thing I ever heard in my life.  
Never? -No.  
Then, by Jesus,  
you are comin' with me.  
-What did your father do?  
-I never met my father.  
You lucky bastard!  
All father's gonna do  
is hold you down.  
Out on my father's boat,  
working da two-a-days.  
This little fat bastard,  
"tug Irish" they call him.  
I finally get up the  
nerves and tell him:  
"I don't wanna spend da rest of  
my life on a goddamn tugboat!"

You know what I'm sayin'?  
You don't wanna spend the rest  
of your life on a tugboat.  
Absolutely, damn right!  
And you know what  
my father says to me?

**He says:**

do you think you are?"  
"What the hell do you  
think you can do?"

**I tell him:**

"Well, if you're askin'..."  
"I wanna be an artist."  
He laughs... "An artist?"  
"God meant for you to work  
a tugboat just like me."  
"And that's exactly  
what you're gonna do."  
Well, I turned myself  
into an artist.  
A tattoo artist!  
I put on every one  
of these myself.  
You have to skin me alive to  
take my art away from me now!  
When I'm dead, I'm gonna  
send him my arm.  
That one.  
Don't let anyone  
tell you different!  
You gotta do what  
you're meant to do.  
And I happen to be  
a god-damned artist!  
But you're a tugboat captain.  
Captain Mike, we're ready  
for you and your friend.  
Go, old timer.  
Break your cherry.  
Hello, ladies!  
Hi.  
He gives me the willies.

That is not for me.  
How are you tonight, grandpa?  
It was a night to remember.  
What are you, Dick Tracy or  
something? I've got to rest.  
I can't.  
Thank you. -No, thank you.  
Have a nice night.  
-Will you be here tomorrow?  
-Every night but sunday.  
It sure made me understand  
the value of earning a living.  
Things money can buy you.  
It's nasty out. Can I offer  
you a ride somewhere?  
That's awfully kind of you, sir.  
My name is Thomas. Thomas Button.  
-I'm Benjamin.  
Benjamin... it's a  
pleasure to know you.  
Would you like to stop  
somewhere and have a drink?  
All right.  
Evening.  
-What will it be, sir?  
-I'll have whatever he's having.  
A Sazerac for both of us.  
With whiskey, not brandy.  
You don't drink, do you?  
-It's a night for firsts.  
-How's that? -I've never  
been to a brothel, either.  
-It's an experience.  
-Certainly is.  
There's a first time for  
everything. -Sure enough.  
Your drinks.  
I don't mean to be rude...  
but your hands, is that painful?  
I was born with some form of  
disease. -What kind of disease?  
I was born old.  
-I'm sorry. -No need to be.  
Nothing wrong with old age.

My wife passed away  
many years ago.  
I'm so so sorry.  
She died in childbirth.  
To children.  
-To mothers.  
What line of work are you in,  
Mr Button? -Buttons.  
Button's Buttons. There isn't  
a button we don't make.  
Our biggest competition is B.F.  
Goodrich and his infernal zippers.  
Would you gentlemen  
like anything else?  
One for the road, Benjamin?  
Only if you let me  
pay for it, Mr Button.  
So, what line of  
work do you do?  
I'm a tugboat man.  
I enjoyed talking to you.  
-I enjoyed drinking with you.  
Benjamin...  
would you mind if, time to time,  
I stop by and say hello?  
Anytime.  
Good night, Mr Button.  
Good night, Benjamin.  
Drive off.  
Where have you been?  
Nothing. I met some people  
and listened to music...  
Oh, sweet Jesus, boy!  
Growing up is a funny thing.  
Sneaks up on you.  
One person is there  
and then suddenly  
somebody else is  
taking their place.  
She wasn't all elbows  
and knees anymore.  
-Benjamin! Come on.  
-Okay.  
I loved those weekends

when she'd come  
and spend the night  
with her grandmother.  
Daisy! Daisy!  
You wanna see something?  
You gotta keep it a secret.  
Get dressed.  
I'll meet you out back.  
Come on!  
Can you swim?  
-I can do anything you can do.  
Put this on. We gotta hurry.  
Is he okay? -Captain!  
Captain Mike!  
Morning, captain.  
Can you take us out?  
Do you know what day it is?  
-Sunday.  
You know what that means?  
It means that I was  
very drunk last night.  
You're drunk every night.  
Is that a girl? -A close friend.  
I want to show her the river.  
I'm not supposed to go  
joy-ridin' with civilians.  
I could lose my licence.  
What are you waiting for?  
She put in for repair.  
A wounded duck.  
She's flyin' now!  
I wish we could go with them.  
Did you say something, mom?  
It's getting really bad.  
Can you hear me, mom?  
Time just seeped out of me.  
Things were changing quickly.  
I don't know how it's possible,  
but you seem to have more hair.  
What if I told you that  
I wasn't getting older,  
but I was getting younger  
than everybody else.  
Well, I'd feel sorry for you.

To have to see everybody  
you love die before you do.  
It's an awful responsibility.  
I've never thought about life  
or death that way before.  
Benjamin, we're meant to  
lose the people we love.  
How else would we know  
how important they are to us.  
And one fall day, a familiar  
visitor came knocking on our door.  
You wanna go with me  
to the drugstore?  
She taught me how to  
play the piano. -Amen!  
And she taught me what  
it meant to miss somebody.  
Let's go.  
I had gone to a brothel,  
I had my first drink,  
Said goodbye to one friend  
and burried another.  
In 1936, when I was coming to the  
end of the 17th year of my life,  
I packed my bag  
and said goodbye.  
I knew, life being what it was,  
I'd probably never  
see them again.  
Good luck to you, son.  
-Thanks.  
-I love you, mom.  
-I love you too, baby.  
I want you to say your  
prayers every night, hear?  
Be safe!  
Benjamin!  
Where are you going?  
-Off to sea.  
I'll send you a postcard.  
From everywhere.  
Write me a postcard  
from everywhere.  
Can you imagine?



He sent me a postcard  
from everywhere he went.  
Every place he worked.  
Newfoundland, Baffin Bay,  
Glasgow, Liverpool, Narvik...  
He had gone with  
that captain Mike.  
Captain Mike had contracted for  
three years with Moran Brothers  
Tug and Salvage. The old  
ship had been refitted  
with a diesel engine  
and a new sea winch.  
We went around Florida  
and up the Atlantic seaboard.  
We were a crew of seven now.  
Captain Mike and me,  
the cookie, Prentiss Mayes  
from Wilmington, Delaware.  
The Brody twins, Rick and Vic  
who got along fine at sea,  
but for some reason,  
once they were on dry land,  
couldn't stand the sight  
of each other. -Enough!  
One in every eight  
boats never returns...  
There was John Grimm,  
who sure fit his name.  
...all hands lost at sea.  
From Belvedere,  
South Dakota.  
And Pleasant Curtis  
from Nashville,  
who never said a word  
to anyone, except himself.  
I wrote him constantly.  
I told him I had been invited  
to audition in New York City,  
for the School of American Ballet.  
Please stay. Thank you.  
Thank you.  
You can stay.  
I was relegated to the "corps".

Another dancing gypsy.  
Benjamin, how is it  
when you showed up,  
you were no bigger than a bollard  
with one foot in the grave.  
Now... either I drink a helluva  
lot more than I think I do,  
or you sprouted!  
What's your secret?  
Well, Captain...  
you do drink a lot.  
We stayed in a small hotel with the  
grand name, "The Winter Palace."  
You have no idea what  
you're talking about.  
The hummingbird is  
not just another bird.  
Its heart rate is  
Its wings beat  
If you was to stop  
their wings from beatin,  
they would be dead in  
less that ten seconds.  
This is no ordinary bird,  
this is a frikkin' miracle!  
They slowed down their wings  
with moving pictures,  
and you know what they saw?  
Their wingtips are doing...  
You know what the figure "8"  
is the mathematical symbol for?  
Infinity!  
Everybody, no matter  
what differences they had,  
languages, the color of their skin,  
had one thing in common:  
They were drunk  
every single night.  
Could you hold the lift, please?  
-Thank you very much.  
Her name was Elizabeth Abbott.  
She was not beautiful.  
She was plain as paper.  
But she was pretty

as any picture to me.  
What are you looking at?  
If you must know, we have  
a long standing agreement  
never to go to bed sober.  
Isn't that right, honey?  
-Whatever you say, darling.  
-Her husband was Walter Abbott.  
He was Chief Minister of the  
British Trade Mission in Murmansk.  
And he was a spy.  
Are you okay, darling?  
-Oh yes.  
I broke my heel off  
one of my shoes.  
I'm not in a habit of walking  
about in my stocking feet.  
They were long days there.  
And even longer nights.  
One particular night, I was  
having trouble sleeping.  
I'm sorry.  
I couldn't sleep.  
I was gonna make some tea.  
Would you like some?  
No, thank you.  
-Milk? Honey?  
-A bit of honey, please.  
I hope you like flies in your  
honey. -Oh, perhaps not.  
Maybe... better to  
let it steep a little.  
Steep? -Soak.  
I don't know, I mean... there's  
a proper way of making tea.  
Where I'm from,  
people just want it to be hot.  
Well, quite right.  
You're a seaman?  
-Sailor.  
I hope I'm not being impolite,  
but I have to ask:  
Aren't you a little old  
to be working on a boat?

There's no age limit,  
as long as you can do the work.  
And you have trouble  
sleeping? Thank you.  
I didn't think I did.  
I usually sleep like a baby.  
Something kept me up.  
My father, in his eighties,  
he was so convinced  
he's gonna die in his sleep,  
he limited himself to  
having afternoon naps.  
He was so determined  
he was gonna cheat death.  
Did he? -Did he what?  
-Die in his sleep?  
He died sitting in  
his favorite chair,  
listening to his favorite  
program on the wireless.  
He must have known something.  
My husband is  
British Trade Minister,  
and we've been here  
for fourteen months.  
-Good God! -We were  
supposed to go to Peking.  
But it never seemed to work out.  
Have you been in the Far East?  
No. I've never been anywhere,  
really. I mean outside harbors.  
And where is it that you're from?  
-New Orleans, Louisiana.  
I didn't know  
there was another.  
And she told me about  
all the places she had been.  
What she had seen.  
And we talked till  
just before the dawn.  
And we went back to our rooms,  
to our separate lives.  
But every night, we'd  
meet again in that lobby.

A hotel in the middle of the  
night can be a magical place.  
A mouse running and stopping.  
A radiator hissing.  
A curtain blowing.  
There's something peaceful,  
even comforting,  
knowing that people you love  
are asleep in their beds,  
where nothing can harm them.  
Elizabeth and I would  
lose track of the night,  
till just before daybreak.  
I think I may have given you  
the wrong impression.  
I beg your pardon?  
Well, married women don't  
customarily sit around  
in the middle of the night  
with strange men in hotels.  
I wouldn't know what a married  
woman does and doesn't do.  
Good night!  
Murmansk.  
"I've met somebody and  
I've fallen in love." Mom?  
That was over 60 years ago.  
-Did you love him, mother?  
-What does a girl know about love?  
I'm not dressed. -You look  
splendid just as you are.  
Don't waste any time bothering  
about the wine or the cheese  
in Murmansk, cause they are  
really completely ordinary.  
But the caviar and the vodka  
are sublime and plentiful.  
So...  
Savor it... and don't  
eat it all at once.  
Because that way, there's  
nothing left to enjoy.  
Now take a little swallow of vodka  
while it's still in your mouth.

Nazdrovia.

You haven't been with  
many women, have you?

Not on sundays.

And you've never had a girlfriend  
before, have you? -No ma'am.

When I was nineteen,  
I attempted to become  
the first woman ever to  
swim the English Channel.

Really?

But the current that day  
was so strong that...

for every stroke I took,  
I was pushed back two.

I was in the water  
for 32 hours.

And when I was  
two miles from Calais,  
it started to rain.

When I couldn't go any further,  
I stopped.

I just stopped.

And everybody asked me  
would I try again.

Why wouldn't I?

I never did.

As a matter of fact,  
I've never done anything  
with my life after that.  
Your hands are so coarse.

I can feel the wind  
in your cheeks.

I'm afraid it's  
the witching hour.

It was the first time  
a woman had ever kissed me.

It's something  
you never forget.

-Benjamin!

-You make me feel younger.

You make me feel years  
younger too. I wish I was.  
So many things I'd change.

I'd undo all my mistakes.  
What mistakes?  
I kept waiting, you know.  
Thinking that I'd do something  
to change my circumstances.  
Do something.  
Such an awful waste,  
you never get it back.  
Wasted time.  
If we're going to have an affair,  
you're never to look  
at me during the day.  
And we're always to  
part before sunrise,  
and we will never say  
"I love you".  
Those are the rules.  
Are you cold?  
-I'm freezing.  
She was the first woman  
that ever loved me.  
Want me to skip some?  
No, glad he had somebody  
to keep him warm.  
I couldn't wait  
to see her again.  
We saw each other every night.  
We always used the same room.  
But each time seemed  
new and different.  
Come here.  
Elizabeth...  
Good night.  
Until one night.  
Yesterday, December 7th 1941,  
the day which will live in infamy.  
...in the near future,  
and possibly beyond.  
There's been a change  
of plan, lads.  
As you may or may not know,  
the Japs bombed  
Pearl Harbor yesterday.  
Frank D. Roosevelt asked

each of us to do our part.  
The Chelsea's been commissioned  
to serve in the United States Navy.  
To repair, salvage  
and to rescue.  
Anybody doesn't wanna go to war,  
now's the time to say so.  
Once you set foot on that boat,  
you're in the Navy, friend.  
I've been meaning to  
talk with you, Mike.  
My wife's doing poorly.  
I'd like to maybe  
see her one more time.  
You're free to make your way  
home any way you can, Mr Mayes.  
If he's leaving,  
who's gonna cook?  
Food poisoning is one of the  
leading causes of death at sea.  
Right after inadequate  
safety equipment.  
I can cook, captain.  
Been doin' it all my life.  
Yeah, I knew it. You're a little  
too old for war, Benjamin.  
Ah, what the hell.  
I'll take any man  
who wants to kick the shit  
out of Japs and Huns.  
That's it! Back to your gear.  
We're going to war, gentlemen!  
She had left a note.  
She wrote "It was nice  
to have met you."  
And that was it.  
It wasn't the war  
any of us expected.  
We just towed crippled ships.  
Scraps of metal, really.  
If there was a war,  
we didn't see it.  
There was a man assigned to us.  
The Chief Gunner loved the Navy.



But most of all,  
he loved America.  
There is no other  
country in the world!  
When you spell A.M.E.R.I.C.A,  
you're spelling freedom.  
His name was Dennis Smith and  
he was a full blooded Cherokee.  
His family had been americans  
for over 500 years.  
These pacifists. They say  
they won't fight on conscience.  
Where would we be...  
if everybody decided to act  
according to their conscience?  
Keep it down, would you chief!  
Hey...  
I've been watching you.  
You seem trustworthy.  
If something happens to me,  
could you see that  
this gets to my wife?  
He had given me all of his pay.  
Hadn't spent a dime of it.  
I want my family to know  
that I was thinking about them.  
All hands on deck!  
Get you asses up here,  
you lazy bastards!  
The war had finally found us.  
Full stop!  
Pleasant, get on that light.  
A transport carrying 1300 men  
had been split by a torpedo.  
We were first to  
arrive at the scene.  
Stop the engine!  
Full stop!  
We were the only sound.  
Fellows!  
We surely can't count  
to outrun them fuckers.  
Battle stations!  
What?

Is that the last one?  
Captain!  
They shot the hell  
out of my paintin'!  
Give me your hand.  
You'll be alright,  
captain Mike.  
Nice spot in heaven's  
waitin' for you. Nice spot.  
You could be mad as a mad dog  
at the way things went.  
You could swear,  
curse the fates...  
but when it comes to the end...  
you have to let go.  
Captain.  
I said my goodbyes to the  
Cherokee, Dennis Smith.  
John Grimm who was right,  
he was gonna die there.  
I sent Pleasant Curtis'  
wife his money.  
I said goodbye to  
the twin, Vic Brody,  
and to Mike Clark, captain  
of the tugboat "Chelsea."  
I said goodbye to all the other men,  
who had dreams of their own.  
All the men who wanted to be  
insurance salesmen or doctors  
or lawyers or Indian chiefs.  
This don't get fixed.  
Out here, death  
didn't seem natural.  
I had never seen a hummingbird  
that far out to sea.  
Before or since.  
And in may of 1945,  
when I was 26 years old...  
I'm coming!  
Queenie? -Yes.  
Oh, sweet Jesus!  
You're home!  
Lord, you came back!

Let me look at you!  
Who's that, mama? -Child,  
it's your brother, Benjamin.  
I didn't know he  
was my brother.  
There's a shit load of  
things you don't know.  
Finish sweeping, wash your hands  
and help me with the table. C'mon!  
Turn around. Oh, you look  
like you've been born again!  
Younger than the springtime.  
I think that preacher laid the hands  
on you gave you a second life.  
I knew it the moment  
I saw you, you were special.  
I tell you what, my knees are  
sore cause I've been on them  
every night asking the Lord,  
I say God, bring him home safely.  
Remember what I told you?  
You never know what's comin'  
for you? -That's right. Sit down.  
Did you learn anything  
worth repeating?  
-I sure saw some things.  
-Oh, you've seen some pain.  
Some joy too? -Sure, sure I did.  
-Yeah, that's what I wanna hear.  
Look at you...  
-Where's Tizzy?  
Oh, baby!  
Mr Weathers died in his sleep  
one night last april.  
Mama, I'm so sorry. -Don't you  
worry about that, baby.  
Well, there's only one or  
two of them left now.  
They're all just about new.  
I guess they're waitin' their  
turn like everybody else.  
I'm so glad you're  
back home with me.  
Now we're going to find you

a wife and a new job.  
Come and help me  
with this table.  
Benjamin! You're wasting  
your time, baby.  
She's stone deaf.  
You'll be staying in what was  
Mrs DeSeroux's old room.  
You're too big to be rooming  
with anybody else.  
It's a funny thing  
about coming home.  
Looks the same. Smells  
the same. Feels the same.  
Did I ever tell you I've been  
struck by lightning 7 times?  
Once when I was sitting in my  
truck, minding my own business.  
You realise  
what's changed, is you.  
And late one morning,  
not long after I'd been back...  
Excuse me, is Queenie here?  
Daisy?  
It's me, Benjamin.  
-Benjamin?  
Oh my God!  
Of course it's you! Benjamin!  
How are you?  
It's been such a long time!  
There's so much I wanna know!  
When did you get back?  
-I got back few weeks ago.  
I spoke to Queenie, she said  
you were in the war,  
somewhere at sea, we were so  
worried about you. -I'm okay.  
Well, look at you.  
You are so lovely.  
You stopped writing.  
When I had left she was a girl.  
And a woman had taken her place.  
She was the most beautiful  
woman I've ever seen.

Beautiful.  
The most beautiful.  
You remember grandma Fuller?  
-Sure I do. -She passed.  
I heard that, I'm sorry.  
I just can't believe  
we're both here.  
Must be fate... no, no,  
what did he call it? Kismet.  
Do you know about Edgar Cayce,  
the psychic? -I don't believe I...  
He says that everything  
is predetermined, but...  
I like to think  
that it is fate.  
I'm not sure how it works,  
but I'm glad it happened.  
Have you been to Manhattan?  
It's right across the river from me.  
I can see the Empire State  
Building if I stand on my bed.  
What about you, where've  
you been? Tell me everything.  
Last time you wrote, you said  
you've been to Russia.  
I always wanted to go to Russia.  
Is it as cold as they say?  
-Twice as cold.  
-My goodness!  
We always said you were different.  
I think you really are.  
You wrote that you met  
somebody. Did it work out?  
It ran its course.  
Hey, do you remember this?  
This is the picture of Old Man  
Kangaroo at 5 in the afternoon.  
Would you like to have dinner?  
Did I tell you that I danced  
for Ballenchine?  
He's a famous choreographer.  
He said that I had perfect line.  
In a rehearsal once,  
a dancer fell.

And he just put it  
right into the production.  
Can you imagine that  
in a classical ballet?  
A dancer intentionally falling?  
There's a whole new word for  
dance now, it's called abstract.  
He's not the only one though,  
there's Lincoln Kirstein,  
and Lucia Chase  
and Agnes DeMille...  
she has just torn up  
all those conventions,  
all that straight up  
and down stuff...  
And she told me about  
this big new world.  
Names that didn't  
mean a thing to me.  
I didn't really hear very much  
of what she was saying.  
It's new and modern  
and it's American.  
They understand our vigor  
and our physicality.  
Oh my God, I've just been  
talking and talking.  
No, no, I've enjoyed listening.  
I didn't know you smoked.  
-I'm old enough.  
I'm old enough  
for a lot of things.  
In New York we stay up all night.  
Watch the sun come up  
over the warehouses.  
There's always something to do.  
I have to go back tomorrow.  
-So soon?  
-Wish I could stay.  
Dancers don't need costumes  
or scenery anymore.  
I can imagine dancing  
completely naked.  
Have you read D.H. Lawrence?

His books were banned.  
The words are like making love.  
In our company,  
we have to trust each other.  
Sex is a part of it.  
I know a lot of the dancers  
are lesbians.  
There was one woman who  
wanted to sleep with me.  
Was that upsetting you?  
-Which part?  
Somebody wanted to sleep with me?  
-You're a desirable woman,  
I would think most of them  
would wanna sleep with you.  
Let's go back to the house.  
Or we can get a room somewhere.  
We can lay down your jacket.  
-I don't know, Daisy...  
It's not that I wouldn't like to.  
I think I'd just disappoint you.  
Benjamin, I've been  
with older men.  
You go back to New York  
in the morning,  
you should be with your friends.  
You're only young once.  
-Oh, I'm old enough.  
Daisy, just not tonight, is all.  
We can go hear some music.  
Our lives are defined  
by opportunities.  
Even the ones we miss.  
You look so handsome,  
so distinct.  
They're sayin' the hurricane is  
gonna miss us. Blow right on by.  
-Oh, that's great.  
-I'll stay under the blankets...  
with mother.  
She said nothing...  
Benjamin?  
Things were becoming  
different for me.

My hair had very little gray  
and grew like weeds.  
My sense of smell was keener,  
my hearing more acute.  
I could walk further and faster.  
While everybody else was aging,  
I was getting younger. All alone.  
Come in.  
Benjamin!  
Do you remember me?  
-Sure I do, Mr Button.  
What happened to you?  
-Darn foot got infected.  
Welcome home, my friend.  
I see you're still drinking  
your Sazerac with whiskey.  
I'm a creature of habit.  
Still visiting the house  
on Bourbon Street?  
Not for a long time.  
Interesting times, though.  
We went from making 40 thousand  
to nearly a million buttons a day.  
We employed ten times  
the number of people.  
We were operating  
around the clock.  
Damn shame.  
The war has been kind  
to the button industry.  
You know...  
I'm sick. I don't know  
how much longer I have.  
I'm sorry to hear that,  
Mr Button. -No...  
I don't have any people.  
I keep to myself.  
I hope you don't mind, but...  
whenever possible,  
I'd enjoy your company.  
I'll certainly do what I can.  
Benjamin, do you know  
anything about buttons?  
Button's Buttons has been



in our family for 124 years.  
My grandfather was a tailor.  
He had a small shop in Richmond.  
After the Civil War,  
He moved to New Orleans  
where my father had the wisdom  
to make our own buttons.  
So, with his help,  
the tailor shop grew to this.  
And today, I can't sew a stitch.  
That's very, very interesting.  
You sure have done  
well for yourself.  
So... what can I do  
for you, Mr Button?  
Benjamin, you are my son.  
I'm so sorry I've never  
told you before.  
You were born the night  
the Great war ended.  
Your mother died  
giving birth to you.  
I thought you were a monster.  
I promised your mother  
I'd make sure you were safe.  
I should never have  
abandoned you.  
My mother?  
This is our summer house  
on Lake Pontchartrain.  
When I was a boy I loved to  
wake up before anyone else,  
run down to the lake  
and watch the day begin.  
It was as if I was  
the only one alive.  
I fell in love the  
first time I saw her.  
Your mother's name was  
Caroline Murphy.  
She worked in your  
grandfather's kitchen.  
She was from Dublin.  
In 1903, Caroline and all

her brothers and sisters  
came to live here,  
in New Orleans.  
I'd find excuses to go  
down to that kitchen,  
just so I could look at her.  
April 25th 1918, the  
happiest day of my life.  
The day I married your mother.  
Why didn't you just tell me?  
I plan on leaving  
everything I have to you.  
I have to go.  
-Where?  
-Home.  
What is he thinking?  
He think he can just show up  
and everything's supposed  
to be fine and dandy.  
Everybody's supposed  
to be friends.  
He got another thing coming,  
that's for sure.  
God be my witness,  
he got another thing coming!  
He left us 18 dollars  
that night you was found.  
and a filthy diaper!  
-Good night, Mom.  
-Good night, baby.  
Did I ever tell you, I was  
struck by lightning 7 times?  
Once I was walking  
the dog down the road.  
I'm blind in the one eye,  
can't hardly hear.  
I get twitches and shakes  
out of nowhere,  
I always lose my line of thought.  
But you know what?  
God keeps reminding me  
I'm lucky to be alive.  
Storm's comin'.  
Wake up.

Let's get you dressed.  
You could be mad as a mad dog  
at the way things went.  
You can swear and  
curse the fates...  
but when it comes to the end...  
you have to let go.  
That sure is a beautiful service.  
He'll be burried right  
next to your mother.  
You're my mother.  
My baby.  
I've never seen New York.  
Excuse me, I'm a friend of  
Daisy's. -Right this way.  
Daisy!  
Yes! I'm in the wardrobe!  
Is somebody looking for me?  
Benjamin! -Hi.  
-What are you doing here?  
-I thought I'd come visit.  
Spend some time  
with you if I could.  
I wish you would have called.  
You took me by surprise.  
-Are you still mad?  
-No. Thank you, they're lovely.  
I couldn't take  
my eyes off of you.  
I thought you were mesmerizing.  
Thank you. That's very  
kind of you to say.  
I better get changed. A group  
of us are going to a party.  
Would you wanna come?  
Somebody told me about a restaurant  
I thought you might enjoy.  
I made a reservation.  
Just in case.  
It's just that all the dancers  
go out after the show.  
You're welcome to come with us.  
I'll get changed, alright?  
This is David.

He dances with the company.  
This is Benjamin.  
I told you about him.  
Oh yeah... how are you doing?  
I'll go get you a drink.  
So, you were a friend  
of her grandmother's?  
Or something like that?  
-Something like that.  
-Excuse me.  
Hey!  
I had no idea you were coming!  
Lord, Benjamin...  
What did you expect?  
What, you want me to drop  
everything? This is my life.  
Hey, going downtown?  
Come on.  
Have a good time. There'll be  
musicians, interesting people...  
You don't have to do that.  
It's my fault.  
I should've called.  
I thought...  
I'll come here and sweep you  
off your feet, or something.  
-Daisy, come on!  
-I'll be right there.  
He seems nice.  
Do you love him?  
I think so.  
I'm happy for you.  
Maybe I'll see you at home.  
Okay.  
I enjoyed the show!  
He came to tell me  
his father had died.  
You couldn't have known.  
I was 23. I just didn't care.  
What did you do next?  
-Some photographs, I think.  
Front of my bag.  
I was as good a dancer  
as I was ever gonna be.

For five years...  
I danced everywhere.  
London, Vienna, Prague...  
I've never seen these.  
Mom, you never talked  
about your dancing.  
I was the only American  
to be invited  
to dance with the Bolshoi.  
It was glorious.  
But Benjamin was never  
far from my thoughts.  
And I'd find myself saying:  
Goodnight, Benjamin.  
-"Goodnight, Daisy."  
-He said that?  
Life wasn't all that complicated.  
If you want, you might say  
I was looking for something.  
Benjamin, Mrs La Tourneau  
just passed.  
Mr Benjamin Button?  
-That would be me.  
Bonjour.  
-Oui, monsieur?  
Miss Daisy Fuller.  
-Just a minute.  
Please, have a seat.  
-Sure.  
Sometimes we are on a collision  
course and we just don't know it.  
Whether it's by accident  
or by design,  
there's not a thing  
we can do about it.  
A woman in Paris was on  
her way to go shopping.  
But she had forgotten her coat,  
and went back to get it.  
When she had gotten her  
coat the phone had rung,  
so she had stopped to answer it  
and talked for a couple of minutes.  
While the woman was

on the phone,  
Daisy was rehearsing for performance  
at the Paris Opera House.  
And while she was rehearsing,  
the woman, off the phone now,  
had gone outside to get a taxi.  
Now a taxi driver had  
dropped off a fare earlier,  
and had stopped to  
get a cup of coffee.  
And all the while  
Daisy was rehearsing.  
And this cab driver who had  
dropped off the earlier fare,  
and had stopped to  
get the cup of coffee,  
had picked up the lady  
who was going shopping,  
who had missed  
getting the earlier cab.  
Taxi had to stop for a man  
crossing the street,  
who had left for work 5 minutes  
later than he normally did,  
because he forgot  
to set his alarm.  
While the man, late for work,  
was crossing the street,  
Daisy had finished rehearsing  
and was taking a shower.  
While Daisy was showering, taxi  
was waiting outside a Boutique  
for the woman to pick up a package  
which hadn't been wrapped yet  
because the girl who  
was supposed to wrap it  
had broken up with her boyfriend  
the night before, and forgot.  
When the package was wrapped,  
the woman, who was back in the cab,  
was blocked by a delivery truck.  
All the while Daisy  
was getting dressed.  
The delivery truck pulled away

and the taxi was able to move.  
While Daisy,  
the last to be dressed,  
waited for one of her friends  
who had broken a shoelace.  
While the taxi was stopped,  
waiting for a traffic light,  
Daisy and her friend came out  
the back of the theater.  
And if only one thing  
had happened differently,  
if that shoelace hadn't broken,  
or that delivery truck had  
moved moments earlier,  
or that package had been  
wrapped and ready,  
because the girl hadn't  
broken up with her boyfriend,  
or that man had set his alarm  
and got up five minutes earlier,  
or that taxi driver hadn't  
stopped for a cup of coffee,  
or that woman had  
remembered her coat  
and had gotten  
into an earlier cab,  
Daisy and her friend would  
have crossed the street.  
And the taxi would  
have driven by.  
But life being what it is,  
a series of intersecting  
lives and incidents,  
out of anyone's control,  
that taxi did not go by,  
and that driver was  
momentarily distracted.  
And that taxi hit Daisy.  
-Daisy! Help!  
And her leg was crushed.  
Daisy...  
-Who told you?  
-Your friend wired me.  
Very kind of you to come all this

way to see that I was alright.  
You'd do the same for me.  
My God!  
Look at you.  
You're perfect.  
I wish you hadn't come.  
I don't want you  
to see me like this.  
Her leg had been  
broken in five places.  
And with therapy, and time,  
she might walk again.  
But she'll never dance.  
I'm gonna take you home with  
me. I wanna look after you.  
I'm not going back  
to New Orleans.  
Then I'll stay here in Paris.  
Don't you understand?  
I don't want your help.  
I know I'm feeling  
sorry for myself,  
but I don't want to be with you.  
I tried to tell you that in  
New York, but you don't listen.  
You might change your mind.  
We are not little children  
anymore, Benjamin.  
Stay out of my life.  
I was awfully cruel.  
He didn't understand that...  
I couldn't have him  
see me like that.  
I didn't leave right away.  
I stayed in Paris for awhile  
to look out for her.  
I never knew that.  
Darling, could you  
get the nurse?  
I taught myself to walk again.  
I took the train to Lourdes.  
Lets take a look.  
That's normal.  
Pulse rate is slowing. She is



gonna struggle to breathe.

Will you be alright?

-Yeah.

Alright, he says:

"I went back home..."

And then there's

lot of pages torn out.

"I listened to the sound of the house." I think I've read that.

He spilled something on it, so it's hard to read, mom.

Something about "sailing".

Does that make sense?

I learned to sail on an old boat of my father's from the Lake House.

I can't lie, I did enjoy the company of a woman or two.

Or maybe three.

Don't bother, Sam. It's just gonna be there again tomorrow.

Mama.

And in the spring of 1962, she came back.

You wanna know

where I've been? -No.

How come you didn't write or nothin'?

Just disappearing like that.

It was something I needed to do for myself.

I never took you to be the selfish type.

I sure hope I'm not wrong.

I'm usually not wrong about people.

-Good night, Momma.

-Good night, baby.

Now have fun.

You haven't said two words.

-I don't wanna ruin it.

Sleep with me. -Absolutely.

I asked her to come away with me.

We sailed into the Gulf,

along the Florida Keys.  
I'm so glad we didn't find  
one another when I was 26.  
-Why do you say that?  
-I was so young.  
And you were so old.  
It happened when it was  
supposed to happen.  
I will enjoy each and every  
moment I have with you.  
I bet I can stay out here longer  
than you. -Bet you can't.  
You barely have  
a line, a crease.  
Every day I have  
more wrinkles. Not fair.  
I love your wrinkles.  
Both of them.  
What's it like,  
growing younger?  
Can't really say. I'm always  
looking out of my own eyes.  
Will you still love me when  
my skin grows old and saggy?  
Will you still love me  
when I have acne?  
When I wet the bed?  
When I'm afraid of  
what's under the stairs?  
What?  
What are you thinking?  
-I was thinking how nothing lasts.  
And what a shame that is.  
Some things last.  
-Goodnight, Daisy.  
-Goodnight, Benjamin.  
Mom?  
When did you meet dad?  
-Some time after that.  
Did you tell him  
about this Benjamin?  
He knew enough, darling.  
Momma!  
Queenie!

Hallo?

Hi, Mrs Carter. It's Benjamin.

Where is everybody?

Oh, Benjamin. Queenie died.

I'm so sorry.

So sorry for your loss.

She was a great woman.

We buried her beside  
her beloved Mr Weathers.

And so we might have  
memories of our own,  
we sold my father's  
house on Esplanade.

It's a wonderful  
old place, darlin'.

I think we're going  
to be so happy here.

Oh, what a long family  
history you have.

They come with the house.

We have to see the master suite.

We bought ourselves a duplex.

I loved that house.

It smelled like firewood.

Don't stop, darlin'.

It was one of the happiest  
times of my life.

We didn't have  
a stick of furniture.

We would have picnics  
in the living room.

We ate when we felt like it.

Stayed up all night  
when we wanted.

We vowed never  
to fall into routine,  
to go to bed or wake up  
at the same time.

We lived on that mattress.

Our neighbor, Mrs Van Dam,  
was a physical therapist.

We lived four blocks  
from a public pool.

You might have got a few

more years out of it.  
You chose to do something  
so special, unique,  
that there was only a short  
window of time you could do it.  
So even if nothing ever happened,  
you'd still be right here  
where you're now.  
I just don't like getting old.  
They put too much  
chlorine in here.  
I promise you, I'll never lose  
myself to self-pity again.  
And I think right there  
and then, she realised...  
None of us is perfect forever.  
She found her own peace.  
She opened a studio and taught  
young girls how to dance.  
Come back the other way.  
Excellent!  
Good night!  
You certainly are  
beautiful to watch.  
Dance is all about the line.  
Line of your body.  
Sooner or later you lose that line,  
and you never get it back.  
I figure...  
You were born in 1918,  
I am 43.  
We are almost the same age.  
We're meeting in the middle.  
We finally caught up  
with each other.  
Wait. I want to remember  
us just as we are now.  
I am pregnant.  
You know, I swear the nurse  
slipped and said it was a boy.  
But I think it's a girl.  
I know you're afraid.  
I'm not hiding it. -Okay.  
-What's your worst fear?

-Baby born like me.  
Then I will love it  
all the more.  
Okay.  
How can I be a father when  
I'm heading the other direction?  
It's not fair to a child. I don't  
wanna be anybody's burden.  
Sugar, we all end up in diapers.  
I'm gonna make this work.  
I want this,  
and I want it with you.  
I want you to have  
everything you want, all of it.  
I'm just not sure  
how to reconcile this...  
Would you tell a blind man  
he couldn't have children?  
You be a father  
for as long as you can.  
I know the consequences.  
I've accepted that.  
Loving you was worth  
everything to me.  
I have to go pee.  
The oldest woman to ever  
swim the English Channel  
arrived here today, in Calais,  
Keep it!  
having made the swim in 34 hours,  
68 years old Elizabeth Abbott,

**arrived at 5:**

exhausted but happy.  
Mrs Abbott, how would you sum  
up in words this achievement?  
I suppose...  
anything is possible.  
Are you ready?  
Yeah.  
In the spring,  
on a day like any other...  
I'll be back in an hour!  
Honey!

Gotta call the ambulance!  
The baby is coming.  
Operator, I need an ambulance!  
Everyone's fine. She's a  
perfectly healthy baby girl.  
Honey...  
She gave birth to a five pound  
four ounce baby girl.  
Did you count the toes?  
She's perfect.  
"And we named her for  
my mother, Caroline."  
This Benjamin was my father?  
And this is how you tell me?  
Excuse me.  
...all the conditions are there  
for the major storm,  
possibly even up  
to a category 5.  
Hey, I know it's hard.  
You can't smoke in here.  
Nobody can tell you exactly  
where it's gonna hit...  
You grew as the doctor had  
promised, normal and healthy.  
You're gonna have to find  
a real father for her.  
What are you talking about?  
She's gonna need someone  
to grow old with.  
She'll learn to accept whatever  
happens. She loves you.  
Honey, she needs a father,  
not a playmate.  
Is it me? -Of course not.  
Is my age beginning to bother you?  
Is that what you're telling me?  
You can't raise both of us.  
It was your first birthday.  
We had a party for you. The  
house was filled with children.  
-How are you?  
-Hey, man.  
Before you turn around,

they'll be in high school, dating.

I sold the summer house  
on Lake Pontchartrain.

I sold Button's Buttons.

I sold my father's sailboat.

I put it all into  
a savings account.

And so that you and your  
mother might have a life,  
I left, before you could  
ever remember me.

"I left with just the clothes  
on my back."

I don't want to read this now.

Can you just tell me  
where he went?

I don't really know.

It's for me. 1970. I was two.

"Happy birthday."

"I wish I could've  
kissed you goodnight."

They are all for me.

**Five:**

"I wish I could've taken you  
to your first day of school."

**Six:**

"I wish I could've been there  
to teach you to play the piano."

"I wish I could've told you  
not to chase some boy."

"I wish I could've held you  
when you had a broken heart."

"I wish I could've  
been your father."

"Nothing I ever did  
will replace that."

I guess he went to India.

For what it's worth,

it's never too late,

or in my case, too early,

to be whoever you want to be.

There is no time limit,

start whenever you want.  
You can change or stay the same.  
There are no rules to this thing.  
We can make the best  
or the worst of it.  
I hope you make the best of it.  
And I hope you see  
things that startle you.  
I hope you feel things  
you never felt before.  
I hope you meet people with  
a different point of view.  
I hope you live a life  
you're proud of.  
If you find that you're not,  
I hope you have the strenght  
to start all over again.  
He had been gone a long time.  
I'll see you next thursday.  
-Good night, miss Daisy.  
-Good night, sweetheart.  
I'm sorry, we're closing.  
Can I help you?  
Are you here to  
pick somebody up?  
Why did you come back?  
Mom?  
Mom!  
You ready yet?  
Mom, what's wrong?  
I was just hearing a very sad  
story about a mutual friend,  
who I hadn't seen  
for a very long time.  
Caroline, this is Benjamin.  
You knew him when  
you were just a baby.  
Hi. -Hi.  
Hey!  
I'm sorry, I thought  
you were done.  
Oh, this is a friend of my  
family's, Benjamin Button.  
This is my husband, Robert.



-How do you do.  
Pleasure.  
It was very nice to meet you.  
We'll be in the car, darling.  
Alright. -Bye.  
I'm just locking up.  
She's beautiful,  
like her mother.  
Does she dance?  
-Not very well.  
I guess that'd be from  
my side of things.  
She's a dear sweet girl.  
She seems a little lost.  
But then, who isn't at twelve?  
There's a lot of her  
that reminds me of you.  
My husband, he's a widower  
... was a widower.  
He's an incredibly kind,  
bright, adventurous man.  
He's been a terrific father.  
-Good.  
You're so much younger.  
-Only on the outside.  
You were right.  
I couldn't have been  
raising both of you.  
I'm not that strong.  
So, where are you staying?  
What are you gonna do?  
I'm staying at the Pontchartrain  
hotel on the avenue.  
I don't know what I'm gonna do.  
They're waiting.  
I remember that.  
That was him.  
Hurricane's changed direction.  
It's gonna make a landfall  
some time soon. -Am I  
supposed to do something?  
Arrangements are being made to  
move people, but it's up to you.  
No, no, we're staying.

I'll let you know  
if anything changes.  
That night, while I was  
sitting and wandering  
why I came back at all,  
there was a knock at the door.  
Come in.  
Are you alright?  
I'm sorry, I don't know  
what am I doing here.  
Nothing lasts.  
I never stopped loving you.  
Benjamin, I'm an old woman now.  
Some things you never forget.  
Goodnight, Benjamin.  
Goodnight, Daisy.  
And as I knew I would...  
I watched her go.  
That's the last thing he wrote.  
Some time after  
your father passed,  
there was a call.  
Hello? Yes, speaking.  
I'm sorry, I don't understand.  
It's the corner house.  
Come on in!  
I'm Daisy Fuller.  
-I'm David Hernandez  
with the Orleans Parish dept  
of Child Welfare Services.  
He was living in the  
condemned building.  
The police found this  
with him, this address,  
it's got your name  
in here a lot.  
He's in a very poor health.  
He was taken to the hospital.  
He doesn't seem to know who or  
where he is. He's very confused.  
I was telling Mr Hernandez  
that Benjamin is one of us.  
If he needs a place to stay,  
it's alright. He can stay here.

Benjamin.  
You play beautifully.  
He doesn't seem to  
like to be touched.  
He goes in and out of  
states of recognition.  
The doctors said if they  
didn't know any better...  
it is the beginnings  
of dementia.  
Do you remember me?  
I'm Daisy.  
I'm Benjamin.  
It's nice to meet you, Benjamin.  
Do you mind if I sit with you?  
I would love to hear you play.  
Do I know you?  
And every day I would stop by  
to make sure he was comfortable.  
Don't think that I don't  
know what you're doing!  
You're all fucking liars!  
He doesn't believe  
he just had his breakfast.  
Why don't we see if we can find  
something else for you to do.  
I have a feeling there's a lot  
of things I can't remember.  
Like what, sugar?  
It's like...  
there's this whole life I had,  
and I can't remember what it was.  
It's okay.  
It's okay to forget things.  
Many times he would simply  
forget who or where he was.  
It wasn't easy.  
-Benjamin!  
I can see everything!  
I can see the big river!  
That's right. You can see  
everything, sweetheart.  
I can see the graveyard where  
mama's buried and other people.

I want you to come down!  
-What if I can fly?  
I knew a man who could fly.  
Come down and I'll  
tell you all about him.  
Somebody go up there.  
He was five when I moved in.  
Nearly the same age I was  
when I had met him.  
This is the picture of Old Man  
Kangaroo at 5 in the afternoon,  
when he got his  
beautiful hind legs.  
The days passed, and I watched  
as he forgot how to walk...  
What's my name?  
...how to talk.  
I'm Daisy.  
Can you say Daisy?  
In 2002, they put up a new  
clock in that train station.  
And in the spring of 2003,  
he looked at me,  
and I knew that  
he knew who I was.  
And then he closed his eyes  
as if he would go to sleep.  
I wish I had known him.  
Now you do.  
Mom, I think I should go  
see what's going on.  
Goodnight, Benjamin.  
Some people are born  
to sit by a river.  
Some get struck by lightning.  
Some have an ear for music.  
Some are artists.  
Some swim.  
Some know buttons.  
Some know Shakespeare.  
Some are mothers.  
And some people... dance.