

## Later Life - + death

Granny was very impatient with illness when it was her own - she hated being ill, it bored her - she was lying in bed during an attack of gallstones (?) one time and her daughters were both there - Hermine lived with her then & Gertrude had come to see her - she startled them very much, or rather shocked them by saying "Well if I'm going to croak, I wish I'd hurry up and croak" - she loved shocking them or anyone else - she'd make a remark designed to shock them sit back and her ample stomach would begin to shake with silent mirth - When reprimanded for further remarks or a too blunt choice of words by her more conventional family she used to say - "I'm old enough to say what I please - I'm an old lady" - and laugh some more - and click off her acousticon so no one could say anything more to her - She could always have the last word this way - and if she turned her head and looked out of the window her isolation was complete -

She would have resented it very much if anyone else had called her an old lady - and even began to dislike being called "Granny" when



she got to be over seventy-five. She used to say "I'm not an old granny! An old granny is a woman with a lace cap who knits and goes to sleep over her knitting - I'm not like that." She loved the title in her younger days when there was really no question of old age -

She kept all her faculties right up to her last illness - tho she was not so steady on her pins the last couple of years and gave up going out almost entirely. It didn't matter very much as people came to see her. She loved callers and loved showing them her work receiving their admiration. She always appreciated her own work as much as anyone. She was not easily satisfied with it but when she had worked hard and produced a good thing she was not hesitant about proclaiming its virtues. She admired and esteemed her own work just as if it had been done by a stranger - she could see its faults and merits with a cool critical eye.

She was sick in bed only one month before she died. Just before she went to bed she said one morning - "I'll read the paper from beginning to end" (she always read three papers a day) and I can't remember anything else.



read, I'm going coo-coo I guess "pointing to her head and making circles with her forefinger - I protested that we all did that sometimes - "Well I don't" she answered "my brain doesn't work any more - I'm getting ready to die" I tried to assure her that she wasn't - but she only said - "Of course I am, why shouldn't I? I've lived a long time, I'll die pretty soon." She seemed to make up her mind to die - feeling that she had lived a good rich life and if she lived any longer she'd be outliving her usefulness. She used to tease Eunice Williams a sentimental friend - by saying "Will you miss me when I die?" She never failed to bring tears to Eunice's eyes <sup>and protestations</sup> then Granny would shake with silent laughter -

She requested no funeral no flowers and to be cremated in a pine box - no fuss and ceremony -

The elevator in the apt we lived in was small. She used to twist the elevator boy by looking it over on trips up & down and saying - "When I die & they have to get me out of this building (1337averly) they will have to upend the coffin and I'll slump right down to the bottom." She did die in that building and we <sup>the family</sup> had to confer & each



other later, that we had all remembered  
Granny's remark about the elevator as  
they carried her out -

Granny didn't die of anything  
specific - She just went to bed and grew  
weaker and weaker and one day went into  
a coma from which she never awakened.

She didn't want to live any longer.  
She didn't want to be an old helpless  
creature - so she died -

The family had all gathered and  
the nurse called us in at the last - I  
didn't go - somehow I couldn't watch  
the death throghs of granny - she was  
in a coma and didn't need anyone  
anyway - I did go in later and am  
glad I did - Granny looked serene  
and younger but most of all she  
looked like the death mask of Voltaire  
all her beautiful bony structure showed  
and the wrinkles had smoothed out  
of her skin. She was so handsome and  
strong and fine looking - I stayed a  
long time - Unfortunately the undertakers  
wouldn't leave it as that - they put rouge  
on her and fixed her hair quite unlike her -  
I fixed it back and took off what rouge  
I could knowing Granny would have  
despised it -

He couldn't comply with all her  
wishes about her burial because pine



books are not available - However she  
was cremated the day after she died - in  
a simple casket - and her ashes were  
taken to oceanside and buried near  
those of her husband - There were no flowers  
except those of the family and the simplest  
of all ceremonies at the crematory - consisting  
of music only -

Waved & said "I'm going  
home" - you are home  
"you know what I mean"

Bob McKee sent flowers  
her favorite color - yellow  
for came to call



### Later Life and Death

Granny was very impatient with illness when it was her own; she ~~had~~ being ill, it bored her. She was lying in bed during an attack of gall-stones one time and her daughters were both there. Hermine lived with her then and Gertrude had come to see her. She startled them very much, or rather she shocked them by saying "Well if I'm going to croak, I wish I'd hurry up and croak". She loved shocking them or any one else. She'd make a remark designed to shock, then sit back and her ample stomach would begin to shake with silent mirth. When reprimanded for tactless remarks or a too blunt choice of words by her more conventional family she used to say - "I'm old enough to say what I please. I'm an old lady", and laugh some more, and click off her acoustican so no one could say anything more to her. She could always have the last word this way, and if she turned her head and looked out of the window her isolation was complete.

She would have resented it very much if anyone else had called her an old lady, and even began to dislike being called "Granny" when she got to be over seventy-five. She used to say "I'm not an old granny! An old granny is a woman with a lace cap who knits and goes to sleep over it. I'm not like that." She loved the title in her younger days when there was really no question of old age.

She kept all her faculties right up to her last illness, though she ~~was~~ not so steady on her pins the last couple of years and gave up going out almost entirely. It didn't matter very much as people came to see her. She loved callers and loved showing them her work and receiving their admiration. She always appreciated her own work as much as anyone. She was not easily satisfied with it but when she had worked hard and produced a good thing she was not hesitant about proclaiming its virtues. She admired and esteemd her own work just as if it had been done by a stranger - she could see its faults and merits with a cool critical eye.



She was sick in bed only one month before she died. Just before she went to bed she said, one morning, "I've read the papers from beginning to end (she read three papers daily) and I can't remember anything I've read, I'm going coocoo I guess" pointing to her head and making circles with her finger. I protested that we all did that sometimes. "Well I don't" she answered, "My brain doesn't work any more, I'm getting ready to die". I tried to assure her that she wasn't but she said, "Of course I am. Why shouldn't I? I've lived a long time I'll die pretty soon" She seemed to make up her mind to die, feeling that she had lived a good rich life and to live any longer would be outliving her usefulness. She used to tease Eunice Williams, a sentimental friend of my mother's, by saying "Will you miss me when I'm gone?" This never failed to bring tears to E.W.'s eyes and protestations. Then Granny would shake with silent laughter.

She requested no funeral, no fuss, no flowers, and to be cremated in a pine box.

The elevator in the building we lived in was small (123 Waverly Pl. N.Y.C.)

She used to twit the elevator boy by looking it over on trips up and down and saying "When I die, and you have to get me out of this building, you will have to upend the coffin and I'll slump right down to the bottom." She did die in that building and we, the family, had to confess to each other later, that we had all remembered her remark about the elevator as they carried her out.

Granny didn't die of anything specific. She just went to bed and grew weaker and weaker, and one day went into a coma from which she never wakened. She didn't want to live any longer. She didn't want to be a helpless old lady, so she died.

The family had all gathered and the nurse called us in at the last. I didn't go. I somehow couldn't watch her death, she was in a coma and didn't need anyone. I did go in later and am glad I did. Granny



looked serene and younger , but most of all she looked like the death mask of Voltaire. All her beautiful bony structure showed and the wrinkles had smothered out of her skin. She was so handsome and fine and strong looking. I stayed a long time. Unfortunately the undertakers wouldn't leave it at that, they put rouge on her and fixed her hair quite unlike her. I fixed it back and took as much of the rouge off as I could, knowing that Granny would have despised it.

We couldn't comply with all her wishes about her burial because pine boxes were not available. However she was cremated the day after she died in a simple casket, and her ashes were taken to Oceanside and buried beside those of her husband. There were no flowers except those of the family, and those of Bob McKee, who must have seen the death notice in the paper and chose to ignore the "no flowers" part. He sent a large spray of yellow flowers, her favorite color, though it must have been years since they had seen each other.

Just before she went into the coma my mother was standing in her door, and Granny lifted her hand and waved, "I'm going home " she said. My mother said, "You are home" Granny waved again "You know what I mean" she said.