IV. Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

--Dylan Thomas, Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night
In the House of the Old

by Janet Renard

On this silent night,
I sit
and watch my candle burn
while listening to
the far off
(O Come! All ye Faithful!) verses.
I think
of what is on the shelf,
too high for me to reach.
It is the gift for
my daughter's daughter,
whom I see -
never.
It gathers the dust of
three long Christmases passed.

The carol's notes, now louder,
seem to me to melt
and change form from
sound to sight.
And I see
Girl Scout
Angels.
(Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!) They have carolled through the endless corridor of identical doors.
To mine, they have come. Come in, I ask.

These girl-shaped angels,
curious of my starched bed linen and musty comforter,
softly sing
(Away in a Manger) and stare, through the steel rod walls of the bed, at my wrinkles.
There is a clear-eyed one
by my spotted hand.
I want to ask her
something. I say,
for you there is,
up on a closet shelf,
a gift, all wrapped
and just for you.
Please take it and say,
thank you grandma.

She looks and climbs on the
vinyl chair as the
girls
(We wish you a merry Christmas!)
move on.
And she takes the
package from the shelf
and looks and
moves on.
(O Holy Night!)

I have given my gift.
The room smells of hay.

Grandma

by Janet Renard

Grandma crocheted
herself into my
afgan.
My afgan Grandma made for me
is electric yellow
and 7-Up green.
So's Grandma.