

## When Sophie Sang

Her sad, grey eyes search again,  
Search the rows of wrinkled faces.  
Sophie's lost -  
Cut off from the sky, where she used to fly.

As I enter the crowded room,  
A line of eager heads turn,  
Like daisies, seeking the sun.  
I say, Good morning, everyone!

The scene is the same as last week  
And the week before that -  
When I visit my mother  
In the Aged Care Home.

But today... today is our final time -  
Mum is no longer here.  
With my father,  
We've come to collect her 'things'.

I hear Nurse say, "Sophie, my dear... what's wrong?  
Come and sit here... Dinner won't be long."

But Sophie rises, as if compelled.  
B flat, flat B – tuning  
Her Marilyn Munro croon -  
*"Blue (she coughs) ... Blue Moon,  
You saw me standing alone...  
Without a love of my own...."*

Eyes frowned shut, she mouths the lyrics.  
The haunting melody,  
Pegged at each end,  
Sags in the middle.  
*"Blue Moon, you knew just what I was there for  
You heard me saying a prayer for  
Someone I really could care for."*

For Sophie, love sheltered her  
In a close family nest.  
Now caged,  
Bird songs are her solace.

For my Dad, his Life-Love came  
And is cruelly gone ... too soon.  
Blue Moon was 'their song.'  
(They swooned it every September  
For as long as I can remember.)

I see a tear on Dad's cheek.  
He steps across the room,  
Trembling hand outstretched -  
"Excuse me, Sophie dear...  
May I dance with you?"

Her eyes catch alight, memory fired.  
His tired feet ignite, memory inspired.  
Their voices soar in vibrato flight –  
*"There suddenly appeared before me  
The only one my arms will ever hold.  
I heard somebody whisper, Please adore me,  
And when I looked, the moon had turned to gold...."*

The gentle, gentle-man and the tiny, tender bird  
Dance - by chance - together,  
Yet - by heart - with another.  
*"Blue Moon,  
Now I'm no longer alone...  
Without a love of my own..."*

Nurse dongs the dinner gong.  
No-one stirs .... but  
In the waiting winter line, an autumn face nods,  
Wistfully supping her own summer wine.

Now, Sophie moves to the door - head high, eyes bright -  
She glides across the floor,  
Serenely, supremely,  
A queen once more.

We came today, depleted by years of creeping loss.  
We came, duty bound, to collect the dross  
Of a sweet and vibrant life.

We leave,  
Bearing Mum's gift of her love -  
More precious than her 'things'.  
A gift lost in plain view,  
Untied ... Unwrapped ... Re-tuned  
When Sophie sang Blue Moon.

(Blue Moon lyrics by Lorenz Hart)