

NOTES

Memory is often the link to our past and the key to our future. This heartfelt, narrative poem may be performed by a female or male and should be entered in Poetry Interpretation. Written as a Valentine to a loving couple, an annual Valentine's Day dance is the setting for this unique love story. Told through a series of flashbacks, the lives of Mary and Sam are revealed. Their love is a testament to their undying devotion to each other. Pacing will play an important part in the performance of this poem. This is a love story; therefore, one should not rush the delivery of lines. The performer will need to choose whether to perform the italicized lines as dialogue or simply additional narration. It will be important for the performer to also decide the character of the narrator. Who is telling this story? Is it Mary and Sam's daughter, Elizabeth? Could the narrator possibly be the manager or fellow resident of the Riverdale Retirement Home? The overall success of this presentation will ultimately lie in the performer's ability to portray the likeability and sweetness of the story being told. The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages of the manuscript.

I mean it.

They are her favorite three words.

They've been her favorite three words for more than seven decades

Here she is, Mary Pickford,

Just crowned Queen of the Valentine's Day dance

At the Riverdale Retirement Home,

Where she's lived for the past eight years

With her husband, Sam.



Let's slip back eight years in time.

Sam, 71 years of age, who has been Mary's rock for fifty plus years

Is showing signs of dementia.

The doctors performed many tests.

Sam is as healthy as a horse.

Unfortunately, his mind is slipping.

The family decides it is time to place Sam in a home.

Mary sells their house and together, they move to Riverdale.

Queen of the Riverdale Retirement Home's Annual Valentine's Day Dance

By Celeste LeBeaux



Let's slip back fourteen years earlier.
Sam, now 57, takes Mary on a third honeymoon.
They fly to Paris and traipse all over Europe.
The trip was a total surprise to Mary.
She couldn't believe it was happening.
When did he plan such a romantic vacation?
Are you really taking me to Paris? Mary asks.
Sam grins like the Cheshire Cat and answers, *I mean it.*



Let's slip back eleven years earlier.
Sam, 46 years of age, is at the top of his game.
He has just been promoted to Senior Advisor for a large corporation.
Mary throws Sam a celebration party.
At this party, their only daughter makes an announcement.
Their daughter, Elizabeth, is going to have her first child.
Mary cries tears of joy, and Sam embraces his grown-up baby girl.
How quickly she grew up, they both think to themselves.



Let's slip back five more years.
Mary, now 41, is lacing a tiny blue ribbon into her daughter's hair.
She has already given her daughter something old, borrowed and new.
Sam is standing at the back of the church.
He is ready to walk his baby girl, Elizabeth, down the aisle.
Sam can feel his eyes well up, as he gives her hand to her fiancée, Steve.
Take good care of my baby girl, Sam tells Steve. *I mean it.*
Mary sits in the first pew crying more tears of joy.



Let's slip back another seven years.
Mary, now 34, has been feeling depressed.
Sam is always working late, and Elizabeth is on another date with Steve.
When did I become just another boring housewife? Mary asks herself.
Mary asks Sam if he's due any vacation time.
Sam suggests they get away to sunny Mexico.
It will be our second honeymoon, Sam tells her.
Mary enjoys the beach, tropical drinks, and time spent with her Beloved.