

## The Old Billiard Marker

He sat on his stool at the close of day,  
For he felt the weight of his many years,  
His form was bent, and his hair was grey,  
And his eyes were dim with falling tears.  
The pub was closed and his work was done,  
And his room seemed now so strangely still,  
As the pale rays of the rising moon,  
Stole silently over the window-sill.

Stole silently into the evening gloom,  
And the deepening shadows fell athwart,  
The vacant table and vacant room,  
And the vacant place in the old man's heart.  
For his show had been all-in-all to him,  
Who had no wife, nor child, nor gold,  
But his frame was weak, and his eyes were dim,  
And the flat was issued at last, "Too old!"

He bowed his head on his withered hands,  
A notice to clear he'd had that day,  
"Too old!" said his bosses, "the room demands  
A sharper and younger man to play".  
"Too old! Too-old!" They both forget,  
It was I who made the connection here,  
Their hearts were hard, I no pity get,  
For my trembling voice and falling tear.

"Too old! 'Too old!" It was all they said,  
I looked in each face, when they had done,  
But they turned away, and my heart was lead,  
Ah! well, it's a rough; I've no friends, no, none."  
The night stole on, and a blacker gloom,  
Was over the vacant table cast,  
The marker sat in his silent room,  
But his mind was back in the days long past.

And he smiled, as his kindly glances fell,  
On the well remembered faces there,  
Tom, Harry, Frank, and Bobby Bell,  
And old Dick Parkes, in the easy-chair.  
And George, "the farmer," and "Bookie" Hall,  
All fond of a game, and convivial glass  
All in their seats, and yet they all,  
Were dead, and under the graveyard grass.

Thus, all night long, till the morning came,  
And the darkness folded her robe of gloom,  
And the sun looked in with his eye of flame,  
On the vacant seats of the silent room.  
The house was opened; the ringing till,  
Told the day's trade had just begun,  
But the face of the marker was white and still,  
His break was ended, the frame was done.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/121797981>

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