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### "Going Out"

Donald Hall

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# Going Out

DONALD HALL

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When my parents celebrated  
or relaxed, it was always  
by going out to dinner.  
When my father died, my mother  
kept eating out with friends,  
with neighbors, and, in the years when she  
substitute-taught, with other teachers.  
Her friends have died. For ten  
years arthritis has kept her  
in a Barcalounger mostly,  
watching birds and schoolchildren, squirrels  
and dogs. Now at ninety,  
she lives in the sunroom  
not too far from toilet and kitchen;  
she cooks in five-minute  
episodes of standing up. One day  
I heard her mention—  
with the scorn we keep for other people's  
frivolities, like Learjets  
or gilded toenails—"Oh, I don't  
care to *go out*." She sews aprons  
and makes scrubbers from nylon  
net. She rereads Agatha  
Christie in Large Type editions.