

ALLAN GURGANUS

For Doctor Ed At Eighty Five

I sing the ballad of the eighty fifth year,  
I sing about a hero, I hope to sing it clear.  
While other fellows are long-gone and Dead,  
There's a doctor who's just startin', You can  
Call him Doctor Ed.

His history begins in a county deep.  
Those Eatmans'd work while the others'd sleep.  
Ed and his brother asked how to make their way.  
And one day it just struck them, "We'll go after tooth decay."

These enterprising boys sought a city that'd count,  
Somehow or other, they just hit on Rocky Mount.  
The ladies saw these youngsters, the ladies all went "AHH,"  
One lacy debutante she said, "Why, Ed, you will go far."

And when they write the record of who set the most teeth right,  
And when they find the work in there still solid, smooth and white.  
Let's hope the Lord will floss us all, and praise us all the while,  
For we are teeth, within the mouth, that spells out one big smile.

While other fellows' fillings are found not gold but lead.  
There's a doctor who's just starting. You can  
Call him Doctor Ed.

One lovely local girl she made Ed's head feel all-a-addle,  
Not only was she pretty, but this one was a Battle.  
A fellow chooses from the many, he picks him just a few.  
Ed said, "May I, darling?". His fairest said, "I do."

What followed was a saga of the prosperous post-War boom,  
The couple settled in West Haven in search of breeding room,  
First came baby Ed and then come young George Hackney,  
Next the stork brought Gordon and finally fair Nell B.  
A creature named Brown Dog loved peanut butter, chased rats.  
Also gone but not forgotten is Miss Zelia O'Teele Smith Batts.

Dr. Ed was so good a father, others asked him for advice.  
He was honest, he played golf well, he paid taxes, he stayed nice.  
He tended to the canines and incisors and the braces.  
He remained the kind of fellow who remembered peoples' faces.  
When he pulled out a gold filling, he chucked it in a sack  
And when he cashed that whole sack in, he brought the gold standard back.

Let the Yankees talk of character, and make fun of our drawl.  
Let them marvel at our slowness, from their own their damn urban sprawl.  
But find me just one Yank who's eighty five and not in bed.  
There's not a living Yankee can outfox our Doctor Ed.

If there's a reckoning in Heaven by the Good Lord high above,  
Let him know that nobody living has found and earned more love.

For Ted  
and Cheryl -  
- Love,  
Allan  
1997

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If a fellow lays up goods in heaven for all the folks ~~that~~ he's <sup>led</sup>.  
Then Dr. Ed's gold crown will be in his mouth AND on his head.

Oh, at eighty five years old, to have his sense of fun.  
Oh, at eighty five years old, to sit up, much less run.  
It's a testament to love itself, and how it's kept him spry.  
A lively mind, a deep sweet soul, a good clear steady eye.

On this day of celebration, on his birthday eighty five,  
Let's praise a man of character and Shady Circle Drive.  
Let's look ahead to decades hence, and we'll all feel less dread,  
If we model our own loving life on our favorite, Dr. Ed.

Allan Gurganus  
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