

TWINKIES

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THEY DON'T MAKE BANANA-FLAVORED TWINKIES ANYMORE

For years I thought something was wrong with my taste buds. I couldn't figure out why one of my favorite foods, as a kid, did not taste the same. I attributed it to the fact that I was older, and things begin to taste different as you age. Then one day, a great light dawned. I read an article about the history of the twinkie. It stated that in the beginning, when the earth was void and darkness covered the world, God created the twinkie and said, "Let it be banana-flavored." And it was so.

Then millenniums later, man looked at the twinkie and said, "We can improve that. Let us remove the banana flavoring and replace it with vanilla flavoring." And they did. And man has been trying to improve everything ever since.

They looked at the Pepsi bottle and said, "It's too big. Let us make it smaller." And that jingle... "Twice as much for a nickel too, Pepsi Cola is the drink for you...nickel, nickel, nickel, nickel." ...that's got to go.

They looked at the popsicle and the Eskimo Pie and said, "That thing about giving a free one every time you find a star on the stick...that's got to go." And lo, the thrill of eating a popsicle or Eskimo Pie and ever so slowly licking the stick to see if you had a star...was gone. There were no more free popsicles or Eskimo Pies.

The best candy ever made was a package of caramels with walnut pieces in them. They were called, "Walnettos," and you bought them at the candy counter in your neighborhood movie theatre. But one day man said, "Candy can't be cheap AND good. These Walnettos have to go." And then they looked and saw that neighborhoods were disappearing and they said, "Why do we need neighborhood theatres if there are no neighborhoods?" And neighborhood theatres were no more.

Then when neighborhood theatres were gone, man said, "Why do we need double features and serials? Let's just make movies twice as big and twice as long." And all the little movie actors who were out of work went into television. And the little actors became big actors on TV. And they said, "Milton Berle and Lucille Ball shall lead us." Then man said, "We must make TV more realistic. Let us have sex and violence and let us have it abundantly." And it was so and the Nielsen ratings were good.

The kinder, gentler folks who peopled the past are gone. The world isn't as simple or as safe as it once was. And it all started that fateful day when they removed the banana flavoring from twinkies.

THERE'S NO CREAM AT THE TOP OF THE MILK BOTTLE ANYMORE

No one puts cream in his or her coffee today. They stopped putting it at the top of milk bottles a long time ago. I suppose that happened because they stopped making milk bottles. What's wrong with a little cream? Today people put milk in their coffee or sprinkle some of that white powder in it. It's not the same. Cream has its own distinctive taste. It tastes so good, it must be bad for you. I'm sure that's why they got rid of it. Anything that good must be dangerous to your health.

It's the same with butter. Most people have no idea what real butter tastes like. It went out about the same time as cream. It suffered the same fate for the same reason. It tasted too good. Today we all use margarine that looks like butter, and some products will even tell you it tastes like butter. Don't you believe it! But how would you know? Most people have no basis for comparison...never having tasted real butter.

For that matter, most people have never tasted buttermilk. I'm sure many are saying right now..."What's buttermilk?" It's a sour-tasting milk that is on its way to becoming cottage cheese. This poses a corollary question. If something tastes that bad, it must be good for you...so why has it all but disappeared?

And speaking of tasting bad...whatever happened to salt-rising bread? The name says it all. It's bread that is heavily laced with salt. It had a unique taste. Once you put a piece of salt-rising bread in your mouth, you would never mistake it for raisin bread.

But time marches on and our diet improves. We now have fat-free milk, margarine instead of butter, whole wheat bread instead of salt-rising bread and blandness instead of variety in our food, and perhaps...our lives?

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? YOU'RE OLD !

The other day I went to the doctor for a bad cold. I told him I used to get over colds in nothing flat. I could function very well while overcoming a cold. Now, whenever I get a cold, it devastates me. I'm knocked out, flat on my back for ten days, or two weeks or more. I asked the doctor why this was so.

He looked me straight in the eye and said, "Because you're old!" Now this is not the kind of thing I wanted to hear. I wanted him to say something like, "I'll draw some of your blood to see if you are anemic" or, "Let me see if you have a vitamin deficiency" or, "Perhaps you have developed an allergy." But he said none of those things. Instead he went on to say, "Haven't you noticed your reaction time and other of your physical attributes have slowed?"

I told him I thought things were moving faster around me, but I never considered it might be because my reaction time has slowed. I just remember that things moved a lot slower when I was younger. Therefore, I was sure there was nothing wrong with me; it was the world that was speeding up.

I'm convinced this is the case because lately I've noticed the days and weeks and even the years go by faster and faster. I'm still moving at my same, steady pace. If this keeps up I'll be really old before I'm ready for it. What I need from a doctor is just a simple word of assurance. I got this bit of advice when I went to the doctor with a bad case of the flu several years ago, "Just take this antibiotic. It won't cure the flu but it might keep you from getting something else. Just rest, drink plenty of liquids and if you're lucky, you'll get over it." In the old days, Doctors used to have something that was called, a "bedside manner."

THE INSPIRATION FOR TODAY'S MOVIES...COMIC BOOKS!

I read an article the other day where a certain movie director is quoted as saying, "Reading comics my whole life made me a better filmmaker and a better writer." I have often wondered where today's movie directors got their inspiration. I don't know about you, but I've noticed certain subtle changes in motion pictures over the years. It used to be that movie directors got their inspiration from people like, John Steinbeck, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and Lillian Hellman to name a few. Many of these writers actually went to Hollywood and wrote screenplays.

Now don't get me wrong. I have nothing against comic books. I read a few in my day. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. I discovered there were better writers than those who wrote for comic books. I'm sure there are some good writers in Hollywood today, but I have a feeling they are a vanishing breed. I mean...how much writing talent does it take to write, "car chase fifteen minutes" or "lovers roll around in bed for ten minutes, groaning loudly."

It seems plot and dialogue has taken a back seat in today's movie industry. It's a lot easier to eliminate both and substitute action and sex. Movie directors with comic book mentalities are making movies for people with comic book mentalities. The scary thing is people are flocking to see these movies.

This comic book mentality is not just relegated to the movies. It has invaded television and politics as well. It's particularly insidious in politics and has become so pervasive that sometimes our leaders actually seem like comic book characters.

WHAT HAPPENED TO WHISTLERS?

I don't know about you, but I still whistle a lot. My dad was a whistler. In fact, most people were whistlers when I was growing up. Why is it you don't hear people whistling anymore? What happened to the great whistlers like Fred Lowery, Elmo Tanner and Muzzy Marcelino? Elmo was the guy who whistled "Heartaches," and Muzzy whistled "The High and the Mighty." Fred whistled a lot of tunes and even had his own network radio program for a while.

They're gone now, and whistlers in general are a dying breed. Most young people today don't know how to whistle. It's really very simple. To borrow a line from Lauren Bacall who said this to Humphrey Bogart in a film called, "To Have and Have Not"... "If you need anything, just whistle. You know how to whistle don't you? You just put your lips together and...blow."

Probably the last great whistling theme was at the opening of "The Andy Griffith Show." A fellow named Earle Hagen composed and whistled that tune and I'll be forever grateful to him. It is one of the last vestiges of a disappearing art.

Why has whistling virtually become extinct? It all started with the advent of rock and roll. That's when melody was supplanted by beat. It used to be that melody was most important. Today the beat is most important. With some few exceptions, there are no beautiful melodies today. It's impossible to whistle a rock piece. It's pretty hard to even hum rock. The best thing you can do with rock is yell at the top of your lungs while pounding on something at the same time.

Writers of melodies have gone the way of writers of great movies and writers of great literature. That kind of stuff takes work. It's easy to write rock. All you need to do is pick a guitar and bang on a drum. Just make sure you have a good beat. Oh, and don't worry about writing any clever lyrics. After all, who needs a Cole Porter today?

GET OUT THERE AND BREED!

I see a lot of stories blaming television and the movies for all the violence in today's society. It seems an awful lot of people are imitating the violence they see in the media. Violence in drama is nothing new. At the end of most of Shakespeare's plays, many of the characters met a violent death. Back in the 30's and 40's, James Cagney, Edward G. Robinson and George Raft were gunning people down with frightening regularity. But I don't remember people going out and trying to imitate the violence in Shakespeare or the movies of an earlier day.

Why are they doing it today? There can only be one answer. There has been an alarming increase in the percentage of stupid people in our society. If young people who watch violent cartoons go out and try to do what the cartoon characters do, then those kids must be a little stupid. Adults who try to imitate violent acts they see on TV or in the movies likewise have to have limited intelligence.

Why do we have so many dumb people today? Again the answer is simple. The stupid people are multiplying more rapidly than intelligent people. It's a fact that the better-educated; more intelligent people do not have many children. Most will have one or two and many choose not to have children at all. However, the less intelligent people are multiplying like rabbits. Stupid people are taking over the world by sheer force of numbers.

Our society is doomed if we allow this trend to continue. We will have more stupid politicians, more stupid movies, more stupid music and stupid writing passing for literature. There is only one solution. The intelligent people must start multiplying faster than the stupid people. Somehow we must get this message to all people with a higher intellect...get out there and breed!

MORE OR LESS CHOICES?

There's an adage that "less is more." If that's true, then our society is on the right track. Due to the proliferation of mergers, we have less grocery stores, less department stores and so on. What is happening is that we have fewer but much bigger companies. This means our choice is getting increasingly limited. Competition is only among a few mega-corporations. The neighborhood grocery store, the family drug store, the little local bank are no more.

Today all of those businesses have been super-sized. You can now go to one gigantic store and buy almost anything. It's now possible to go to one store and buy a new suit and a jar of pickles. Everything is self-service. You have to find out where the ketchup is or where the soup is located. Everything is pre-packaged. Never mind that you want only four hot dog buns, you have to buy the whole package.

Even the media has merged. Today there are only a few companies in each city that own all the radio stations. Have you noticed you can hear the same traffic reporter on several stations? Sales people no longer sell just one station they sell several. "You don't want to buy the country music audience? Well then, let me tell you about our hard rock station."

On the other hand we do have certain things in our society that are multiplying and are providing increased competition. Important things like...bagel stores. There are innumerable bagel companies and at least 400 kinds of bagels. Now there is competition. And what about all those tanning parlors? There's one on every corner. A good tan is never more than a block away.

So is less more or is more less? I think the trend is obvious. It won't be long before we have mega-bagel stores and gigantic tanning parlors. They might even be combined so you can get a tan while eating a bagel.

IT'S FREEZING IN HERE!

One summer day I was eating in a restaurant and the air conditioning was turned up so high, you could see your breath. I asked the young waitress if she could turn the air conditioning down. She stood there, looking at me in her sleeveless blouse and brief skirt and said, "Why? Is it cold in here?" I don't know about you, but I find that most restaurants, movie houses and several other businesses have a policy to turn up the air conditioning as high as it will go and leave it that way. They have this little box that covers the temperature control and it's always locked and no one has the key.

We older people who grew up without air conditioning have not yet adjusted to it. We remember the hot houses and the hot automobiles when the only thing you had for relief was an electric fan. An electric fan does not make cold air. It just blows around the hot air. This meant that there was not much you could do about the hot weather other than get used to it. And we did just that. I remember it being hot in our house and in our car, but hey...it was no big deal. We survived. I remember as a kid, on a hot night, we used to sit out on our front steps eating ice cubes until we got sleepy. Then we went in and hit the sack and woke up the next morning drenched in our own sweat.

Perhaps you've noticed whenever older people go into a restaurant or a movie theatre, they always carry a sweater. And maybe you've visited your parents or grandparents and found they don't have their air conditioning on.

Young people are likely to say, "What good is air conditioning if you don't turn it on?" Well, we're just waiting until it gets REALLY hot before we use it. Yes, we're frugal. Running air conditioning costs money. But the real reason we don't use it that much is because it doesn't seem right. Summer should be hot. To sit inside during the hot summer months and nearly freeze to death just doesn't seem natural.

THE NEXT SOUND YOU HEAR...

Everything seems to be going digital. The world of analog we knew and loved is fast disappearing. Television is turning digital, radio is starting to turn digital. There is no way to avoid the digital revolution. It seems logical then; if you can't avoid it, join it. When shopping for a new digital television set I have been advised to be sure to get a good sound package. For some reason digital television cannot be enjoyed unless you have surround-sound. Likewise if you are going to buy a new radio, then it must be the new Bose technology or something similar to it.

A lot of older people are resisting this change. They are asking questions like, "Why should I buy a new digital TV set when my old analog looks just fine." They tell us digital has more lines of resolution and therefore you can actually see blades of grass blowing in the wind. For some reason, seeing each blade of grass blowing in the wind is something we shouldn't do without. When we ask about surround-sound we are told that with it the sound comes from all sides and makes you feel you are in the picture. I don't know about you, but there are a lot of programs on television in which I really would prefer not to be in the picture.

Our generation grew up with AM radio before there was FM and before there was stereo. Younger people can't see how we can stand to hear music on AM or without stereo or surround sound. But that's the way we have heard music most of our lives. Besides a lot of us are doing good just to hear any kind of sound coming from our sets.

We grew up with analog television and many of us still wonder after watching a lot of today's television, digital or otherwise...did God really intend for man to send pictures through the air? We can remember when it was a miracle just to see a moving picture on a TV set. Some of us were so caught up in the wonder of this invention that we turned on the TV before stations signed on the air, just to watch the test pattern.

Pretty soon they are going to stop making analog sets and stop broadcasting in analog. The new TV sets have a wide screen rather than a 3x4 ratio. We will have a bigger and better picture and better quality sound.

So far I haven't heard anything about how they are planning to improve programming. I suppose the theory is to make television look and sound so good technically that we will not notice the programming has not improved.

NOTHING IS SMALL ANYMORE

Recently I went into a coffee shop and ordered a small cappuccino. The clerk said, "We don't have a small." I asked, "What do you have?" She replied, "We have tall, grande and venti." I said, "So the tall is a small?" "No," she said, "it is a tall." "Then just give me the smallest you have."

"You mean a tall?" "Yes, if a tall is really a small."

Based on this experience I determined never to use the words "tall," "grande," or "venti." I now look the clerk right in the eye and order a small, medium or large. I have to place my order with such determination in my eyes that they will not question my semantics. Who gave a coffee shop the right to change the English language anyway?

The other thing that bothers me about coffee shops is that no two seem to use the same language for the types of drinks they serve. At my favorite coffee shop I always order a café au lait. The other day I went into a coffee shop and ordered a café au lait. The clerk whispered to her co-worker, "What's a café au lait?" Her co-worker said, "Oh, that's a misto." A misto? I asked, "Why is it called café au lait in one of your stores, but misto here?" "I don't know. You'll have to ask our manager." "Who is your manager?" "He's that tall guy over there." "Tall? You mean that little guy over there?" "No that big guy over there." "Oh, you mean that venti guy over there!"

For some reason she didn't think that was funny.

LET IT RING!

One of the great mysteries of modern life is why people break their necks to answer the phone as soon as it starts ringing. I remember when it was no big deal to let the phone ring several times before answering it. People used to wait until you answered no matter how many rings there were. Now three rings seem to be the maximum. Someone made up a rule that if no one answers after three rings, you must hang up.

In my day every house had only one phone. This meant that the phone frequently was quite some distance from you when it rang. You might be in the basement or the attic and the phone is on the main floor of the house. So what did you do? You simply sauntered very nonchalantly to the phone wherever it was. There was no hurry. No one would hang up. They would wait until someone answered.

There is nothing more frustrating than answering the phone after three rings and find the person calling did not have the patience to wait until someone answered. I guess it's because the world is traveling at a faster pace today. Everyone is in a hurry. Why everyone is in a hurry no one has yet discovered. I think it might have something to do with the fact we are quite simply more and more obsessed with speed. A good football player might not be proficient in a lot of other areas, but if he has speed, he's got it made. The speed of a tennis ball is now regularly measured. The internet service which can deliver the fastest speed has a distinct advantage. There are even eating contests in which the contestants devouring the most food in the shortest amount of time are declared the winners.

Is there anything left in which speed is a handicap? One of the few things left where speed is not important, and probably never will be, is reflected in the late Mae West's memorable song...

"There isn't any fun
In getting something done
If you're rushed when you have to make the grade
I can spot an amateur, appreciate a connoisseur in his trade
Who'd qualify, no alibi, to be the guy what takes his time."

WHO WRITES THOSE HEADLINES?

The other day I read a story in my local paper with the headline, "71 year old driver rear-ends car." This got me to thinking. What if the driver was 34 years old? Would the headline read, "34 year old driver rear-ends car?" I doubt it. I don't know who wrote this headline, but whoever did is guilty of reinforcing a stereotype. All the statistics I have seen document that young people are the most accident-prone drivers on the road, not older people. The insurance companies know this. Have you ever checked the insurance rates for teen-age drivers? Yes, I know most people envision older drivers as being overly cautious and driving too slow. That's why, when I see a white-haired senior citizen tooling down the highway at a high rate of speed, I am thrilled beyond belief. It's these kinds of seniors who help break this stereotype. I am especially encouraged if the fast driver is an elderly female. Females, young and old, are often characterized as being too cautious and driving too slow. That is why, when I see a fast-driving older female, I break into a big smile. Another stereotype bites the dust!

Another thing that makes me smile is when I see an old geezer driving a very expensive sports car. I guess I'd have mixed emotions if I saw a headline that read, "81 year old driver of Corvette rear-ends 81 year old driver of Porsche."

WAS EVERYTHING BETTER IN BLACK AND WHITE?

I received a poem the other day in my e mail. Yes, there is another stereotype you can dismiss. More seniors than you think are computer–literate! Anyway this poem decried the state of television today saying,

I wanna go back to black and white
 In God they trusted, alone in bed they slept
 A promise made was a promise kept
 They never cussed or broke their vows
 They'd never make the network now
 But if I could, I'd rather be
 In a TV town in '53
 It felt so good, it felt so right
 Life looked good in black and white.

It seems to me the person who wrote this was looking at black and white through rose–colored glasses. Life was good, but never as good as we remember it. However life before television, now that's a different story! Before television, the golden age of radio reigned supreme. That was a day when anything could happen and no one needed stuntmen or special effects. You just used your imagination.

When Fibber McGee opened his closet door we all knew what was going to happen, but we waited breathlessly for it. Everything imaginable came tumbling out of that closet. Another one of our favorites was the Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy show. This was very strange indeed...a ventriloquist on radio? Bergen never had to worry about people seeing his mouth move. Then there was "Your Hit Parade" featuring a young singer named Frank Sinatra. A lot of people didn't care for him because Bing Crosby was the reigning pop singer and no young punk was going to replace Crosby.

There were soap operas, dramas, action/adventure and horror programs like "Inner Sanctum." One of my favorites was "Duffy's Tavern." Ed Gardner was the star but he wasn't Duffy. Duffy never appeared on the show. I loved the way the show opened. A telephone rings and Ed Gardner answered, "Hello Duffy's Tavern where the elite meet to eat. Archie the Manager speakin,' Duffy ain't here."

Younger people have often asked me, "What did you do when you listened to radio? Just sit there?" I don't know what other people did but I liked to lie down and trace the pattern on our living room carpet. In those days, most carpets had patterns on them. I'd listen and my finger would go round and round on that pattern. Sometimes I went all over the living room before the program was finished. Today you can't do anything like that. Not only does most carpeting not have a distinct pattern, but television also demands your visual as well as your aural senses. Sometimes that's just too much.

WE WAS WONDERIN' WHERE YOU WAS AT!

Some time ago I read an article that stated most talk show hosts are from the Midwest. The reason given for this was that the Midwest is the one place in the United States where people have little or no accent. Therefore it is much easier to understand a person from the Midwest. I checked this out and found that Johnny Carson was from Iowa...David Letterman and Jane Pauley are from Indiana...Jack Paar was from Ohio....Arsenio Hall is also from Ohio...Dick Cavett is from Nebraska...Mike Douglas was from Illinois and Tavis Smiley grew up in Kokomo, Indiana!

While it may be true that most Midwesterners do not have a distinctive accent, we nevertheless do have some peculiarities in our speech. I have heard some Hoosiers pronounce creek as "crick," oil as "orl, and wash as "warsh." When referring to something very small it is not unusual to hear, "It was just an itty bitty thing." Probably the most commonly mispronounced word is "git" instead of get. I have discovered that most people who use these pronunciations are usually from southern Indiana, which as you know, is dangerously close to Kentucky. We Midwesterners also have certain grammatical flaws. I remember when a friend of mine had to leave me for a short time and I said, "You go ahead, I'll wait on you." He looked at me curiously and said, "Do you mean, 'I'll wait FOR you?'"

Seniors in the Midwest have some good old-fashioned sayings that have endured through the years. For example many seniors express surprise by saying, "What in the sam hill are you doing?" Or when talking of something that has been over-exaggerated, "Oh, that doesn't amount to a hill of beans." Or when food might get exposed to a little dirt, "Oh go ahead and eat it, you have to eat a peck of dirt before you die anyway!"

Midwesterners, like a lot of other people in this country, have a predilection for ending sentences with a preposition. Most of the time that preposition is the insidious ..."at." "Yep, that's where I was at." Redundancy is a problem almost anywhere. You frequently hear that a person is a convicted felon. Can a person be a felon if he has not been convicted? We hear people admonishing others to remember that old adage...or old maxim. Doesn't it go without saying that adages and maxims have to be old? Television sports people have favorite redundant sayings like...exact same...that's the exact same play they ran earlier...or...most definitely...how can anything be more definite than definitely? But what I consider to be the ultimate in Midwestern grammatical illiteracy occurred when I came back to work late from lunch one day and the receptionist greeted me with, "We was wonderin' where you was at!"

DO WE REALLY NEED LIBRARIES?

I overheard a conversation the other day that bothered me. There was this discussion about how many libraries are expanding. Some have gigantic cost over-runs. The end result is that today's modern library looks like a palace compared to the dark and dreary libraries of the past. As I listened, I heard one person in the group say, "Why are we building more libraries? In the future we won't need libraries. The internet and other electronic technology will give us all the information we need."

I began to wonder about this statement. I recall when television came along people were predicting this was the end of radio and the movies. It didn't happen. Radio and movies changed, but they did not disappear. If libraries disappear, then won't books disappear? In the future will we simply curl up with a good web site? When bedtime comes, will children gather about the computer monitor as Dad or Mom reads them a story? Will a clergymen tell his congregation to open up their lap tops, turn to www.bible.com and read the text for the day?

There is now a new technology that introduces electronic books. It is called, "Kindle." Kindle works like a cell phone. You can download a book in less than a minute. You can do this no matter where you are no matter what time it is. It has a screen and you can read it just like you read a book. The book can be erased when you're through with it. No need to have libraries in homes anymore. Will this technology replace libraries completely? Only time will tell.

The real problem researching using the internet is that inaccuracies run rampant through most web sites. It's great that people can contribute biographies and other facts to web sites, but much of this information comes from people who don't bother to check facts or do research. Much of this misinformation is passed on to other people who accept it without even thinking about challenging it.

Today most college students compose their term papers on a personal computer and collect most of their sources from the internet. Many try to get by without ever visiting the library. The problem with this is that Spell-Check cannot be counted on to check your spelling or grammar. For example Spell-Check doesn't know the difference between THERE, THEIR, or THEY'RE. These mistakes usually are not caught before a paper is handed in because unfortunately many students don't know the difference.

THERE ARE NOW NO "STARS IN THE HEAVENS"

MGM used to have a slogan..."All the stars that are in the heavens!" But I wonder...where have all the stars gone? I used to see two of my favorite actresses...June Allyson and Jane Powell quite regularly on television. But they no longer are appearing in those "Depends" commercials. Florence Henderson has taken over. Now I like Florence Henderson but I'll bet she doesn't sell as many Depends as June and Jane. I wonder...is there something about the entertainment industry that makes women incontinent?

There must be certain laws of progression and dissension that govern the entertainment business. You start out as a bit player, then a supporting player and then...if you're lucky...you become a star. But the stars in the film industry don't last forever. Before you know it, a downward spiral has begun. A star is downgraded to a supporting actor, then bit parts again...maybe a TV series and then they are commercialized. Suddenly we see "The Flying Nun" doing commercials for Osteoporosis! Sally Field is an Oscar winner. I don't care if her bones are brittle. I think she can still carry a big picture.

Many actors have developed distinctive voices. If you have a distinctive voice, you don't have to appear on television...you just talk over the video. This is more acceptable because a lot of people will recognize the voice as being familiar but they can't place it. Because of this, people are naturally attracted to the commercial and a guessing game ensues. Isn't that Sam Eliot? I think that is Kevin Spacey. That can't be Julia Roberts! Isn't that John Boy Walton?

But my favorite star commercial of all time was the one for Paul Masson wine starring the great Orson Welles. With his organ-like voice Welles used to intone..."We will sell no wine before its time!" I not only liked that commercial. I liked the implication. That is, that things improve with age.

I was seventy-nine this year,
I shall shortly be losing my bloom:
I have experienced elation and fear
And have found I'm getting too old too soon

When you come to this time of abatement,
To this passing from Summer to Fall,
It is manners to issue a statement
As to what you got out of it all.

So I'll say, though reflection unnerves me
And pronouncements I dodge as a menace,
That I think (if memory serves me)
There was nothing any better than tennis!

(with apologies to Dorothy Parker)