

# The Ageing Woman: From Grave (Bone) to Cradle (Blossom)

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**Abstract:** From Grave (Bone) to Cradle (Blossom) explores how the ageing woman's journey is a celebration of transformation and transcendence. Through the mediums of poetry, prose and text, ageing as a blossoming process, as well as a paring back to bone experience, charts the territories of dual oppositional yet complementary sources of energy. Inherent in these poems is the idea that the two spaces (of *Bone* and *Blossom*) can co-exist. Tensions between one state and another define spaces where suffering and endurance, courage and grace are symbiotic. Points of reference are drawn from the world of music (Kate Bush's *Aerial*), critique (Frank Kermode), and my own poems, together with arguments taken from academics in the areas of surrealism, literature and feminism. Pablo Neruda once asked the question: 'What did the tree learn from the earth to be able to talk with the sky?'<sup>1</sup> This is a question birthed from the passage of years, a question only a grounded ageing woman, connected to the cosmos, can answer. In poetry such as 'The Beauty of Shadow' and 'Bones', the ageing woman is alert to the emotional shadings within, contradictory yet balancing emotions conveyed in poems which include 'To Celebrate my Magenta Coming of Age' and 'Cenote' (associated with the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico). 'Cenote' relates to entering mystical worlds. Passing through entrances to these worlds is reliant upon deconstructing a sense of the here and now, a deconstruction which also forces the re-examination of gender roles from the perspective of ageing. From Grave (Bone) to Cradle (Blossom) offers the ageing woman the prospect of birthing, and subsequently rebirthing, ideas upon which dual elements (male/female, light/shade) both expand and contract her sense of identity, ultimately bequeathing a recognition of strength, power and celebration.

**Keywords:** ageing women, poetry, transformation, transcendence, identity