

Daisy Crown

GRANDPA is a white-haired man in his mid-80s. He is playful with his granddaughter, but he has an air of solemnity and melancholy to him.

ZOE is his 7-year-old granddaughter. She is curious, bright, and joyful. She enjoys spending time with her grandfather.

SETTING: Hyde Park. It is morning. The sun shines, grass sways, daisies bloom.

As the lights come up, sounds of the park are heard. Ducks splash in the Serpentine, birds chirp in the trees, and insects buzz. There are no people in the park. The stage is sloped as if on a slight hill. After a moment, GRANDPA and ZOE enter.

GRANDPA: There now. This will do just fine. *(He pulls a blanket from his shoulder bag, sets the bag down, spreads out the blanket, and, with some difficulty, sits down on the hill.)*

ZOE: Grandpa! Where are all the people? I've never seen the park empty before.

GRANDPA: They're all getting ready for tomorrow, sweetheart.

ZOE: Should we be getting ready, too?

GRANDPA: We are. We're getting ready by visiting the park! Now, you promised to show me your cartwheels. Go on!

ZOE: Yes, sir!

(ZOE begins performing cartwheels. This is very presentational, and GRANDPA applauds and encourages her. After a bit, she begins doing handstands, rolls, and other simple tumbling.)

GRANDPA: *(Pretending to be shocked)* My dear, you belong in a circus! *(ZOE giggles and begins twirling and skipping.)* And a dancer, too? Is there anything you can't do? *(Gasps)* Can you tame lions, too?

ZOE: Of course I can!

GRANDPA: Well then, little one, you could have been an entire one-woman circus!

ZOE: *(Giggles. Gets idea.)* Grandpa, will you make me a daisy crown to wear in my one-woman circus? I'll be the Daisy Queen of the circus!

GRANDPA: Of course, Zoe. *(Begins picking and linking daisies into a chain. ZOE comes and sits by him, watching.)*

ZOE: Grandpa, what else are we going to do today?

GRANDPA: After this, I think we'll go get some ice cream.

ZOE: But won't all the shops be closed today? Since everyone's getting ready for tomorrow?

GRANDPA: Don't worry, Zoe. Even if they are, we'll find some.

ZOE: What then?

GRANDPA: Whatever you want, sweetheart. Whatever you want. (GRANDPA *has finished the daisy crown.*) Are you ready for your coronation, Daisy Queen?

ZOE: Oh, yes! (*Eagerly waits as GRANDPA ceremoniously places the crown on her head.*) Thank you, Grandpa!

GRANDPA: You're welcome, poppet.

ZOE: Grandpa, will you read me one of your stories?

GRANDPA: Of course. (ZOE *lays her head upon GRANDPA's knee. From his shoulder bag, GRANDPA pulls out a thick, old, tattered book of poems. He turns to a specific page.*) This is a poem that a man named Czeslaw Milosz wrote in Polish. (ZOE *looks up at him in confusion.*) Don't worry, dear. I'll read it in English. (ZOE *nods, satisfied, and lays her head back down.* GRANDPA *clears his throat and begins reading.*)

On the day the world ends
A bee circles a clover,
A fisherman mends a glimmering net.
Happy porpoises jump in the sea,
By the rainspout young sparrows are playing
And the snake is gold-skinned as it should always be.

On the day the world ends
Women walk through the fields under their umbrellas,
A drunkard grows sleepy at the edge of a lawn,
Vegetable peddlers shout in the street
And a yellow sailed boat comes nearer the island,
The voice of a violin lasts in the air
And leads into a starry night.

And those who expected lightning and thunder
Are disappointed.
And those who expected signs and archangels' trumps
Do not believe it is happening now.
As long as the sun and the moon are above,
As long as the bumblebee visits a rose,
As long as rosy infants are born
No one believes it is happening now.

Only a white-haired old man, who would be a prophet

Yet is not a prophet, for he's much too busy,

Repeats while he binds his tomatoes: - (GRANDPA *stops. He looks from his book to his granddaughter's peaceful, daisy-crowned head on his knee. He touches her hair.*)

Repeats while he links his daisies:

There will be no other end of the world.

(GRANDPA *looks up to the sky.*)

There will be no other end of the world.