

## POETRY

**Christine Larsen**

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### IF... the parody

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are crowding your thoughts with their solutions.  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
And exhausted by pain, don't deal in lies,  
Or being misunderstood, don't give way to helplessness,  
And frustration, though advice is wise:

If you can dream—and not let logic be your master;  
If you can think—and allow your mindset stay your aim;  
If, 'head-on' you meet both Triumph and Disaster  
They're both impostors. Treat each the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth by others spoken  
Twisted by love and fear; they are not fools,  
They can't bear to see what you gave your life to, broken,  
Want to stoop and build 'em up with other's answers...  
others tools.

If you, with grace, can recognise your treasured winnings  
You won't risk them on the whims of chemo's dross,  
Maybe lose the chance to start again at your beginnings  
No plan to breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and 'wannabees'  
To lighten spirits long after yours are gone,  
And still be there, in words, when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to all: 'Hold on!'

If you can create words and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with angels—both heavenly, and with the common touch,  
If dearest care of loving friends surround you,  
If they share your courage, just exactly enough;  
If you can fill another's empty hours  
With endless minutes as the timers run,  
Peace and comfort on Earth can be ours,  
And—what is more—you'll be a Hero, my beloved one!

\*\*with humble apologies to Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) and his famous poem,

Christine's poem is exactly as named; a parody of the famous 'IF' created by Rudyard Kipling. Following a recent diagnosis of Stage 4 lung cancer, and after exhaustive research and consideration, she decided to fight this cancer alone, with no chemical threat to her creativity. The poem 'IF' sprung to mind as one of her most important affirmations. And the idea to 'bend it' to cover her real-life situation was born.

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## BIO- NOTE

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Christine Larsen is an Australian in her seventh decade - a writer, farmer, wife, mother, grandmother - now on their retirement farm. Christine's three main genres are - memoirs, of growing up in the 1950's in Australia, of farming, and of treasured collections, children's stories, for middle-school age readers, also excellent read aloud stories by parents, siblings, grandparents, babysitters, teachers, and short stories + flash-fiction (and non-fiction) collections, a range of almost every genre, from humour to deepest sadness.