

Gout

"It can't be gout," I said,
"Gout it cannot be.
A sprain, a strain or even bruise,
This tender, swollen part of me.
I know I hurt it as I walked,
That knot behind my big right toe,
And tender as it is now
Twill soon be well I know.

"Jiggs of the funny papers,
I recall, 'twas *he* had gout.
He propped his bandaged foot;
Maggie, his wife, would shout
And rave and shake her rolling pin.
It can't be gout. Gout it cannot be.
Gout's an old man's misery;
An old man dissipated;
A glutton; much high life has he,
Rich sauce and gravy, cheese and barbecue;
Overindulged and overweight,
A fat old man. It can't be true."

The Doctor looked and spoke one word.
"Gout," said he.
They took some blood — reported
"Uric acid is way up high.
Just as sure as you're alive
Gout is what it's sure to be."
"It can't be gout," I said.
"Gout it cannot be ..."
A mirror caught me in its sight:
Old, obese and dissipated.
(Did you ever watch me when I ate?)
Overindulged and overweight.
No doubt —
It's gout.

OLD ED FOLK



Old Ed Folk worked for Monsanto at Research Triangle Park from 1962 to 1982, with occasional excursions to Alabama, Missouri, and Texas. He retired from Monsanto in St. Louis in 1985 before settling in Greenville, N.C., in 1987. His story "Sudden Memory" was published in the November 2003 Urban Hiker.

