

NURSE

Even or odd, of all days in the year,
Come Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen.
Susan and she. God rest all Christian souls!
Were of an age: well, Susan is with God;
She was too good for me: but, as I said,
On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen;
That shall she, marry; I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years;
And she was wean'd, I never shall forget it,
Of all the days of the year, upon that day:
For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,
Sitting in the sun under the dove-house wall;
My lord and you were then at Mantua:
Nay, I do bear a brain: but, as I said,
When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple
Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,
To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug!
Shake quoth the dove-house: 'twas no need, I trow,
To bid me trudge:
And since that time it is eleven years;
For then she could stand alone; nay, by the rood,
She could have run and waddled all about;
For even the day before, she broke her brow:
And then my husband. God be with his soul!
A' was a merry man. took up the child:
'Yea,' quoth he, 'dost thou fall upon thy face?
Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit;
Wilt thou not, Jule?' and, by my holidame,
The pretty wretch left crying and said 'Ay.'
To see, now, how a jest shall come about!
I warrant, an I should live a thousand years,
I never should forget it: 'Wilt thou not, Jule?' quoth he;
And, pretty fool, it stinted and said 'Ay.'

NURSE

Even or odd, of all the days in the year, she'll be
fourteen on the night of July 31st. She and my
daughter Susan—God rest all Christian
souls—were born that same day. Well, Susan died
and is now with God. She was too good for me.
But, as I said, on the night of July 31st, Juliet will be
fourteen. Yes, she will indeed. I remember it well.
It's been eleven years since the earthquake, and it
was on that very day that she stopped nursing from
my breast. I'll never forget it. I had put some bitter
wormwood on my breast as I was sitting in the sun,
under the wall of the dovehouse. Your husband and
you were in Mantua. Oh my, what a great memory I
have! As I said, when Juliet tasted the bitter
wormwood on my nipple, the pretty little thing got
angry with my breast. That's when the earthquake
hit and the dovehouse started to shake. You didn't
have to tell me to get out of there. It's been eleven
years since then. She could stand up by herself
then. No, in fact, by then she could run and waddle
all over the place. I remember because just the day
before she had cut her forehead. My
husband—God rest his soul, he was a jolly
man—picked Juliet up. "Oh," he said, "Did you fall
on your face? You'll fall backward when you grow
up, won't you, Jule?" And, by God, the pretty little
thing stopped crying and said, "Yes." To watch a
joke come true! Even if I live a thousand years I'll
never forget it. "Won't you, Jule," he said. And the
pretty fool stopped crying and said, "Yes."