

# SEPTILES

(sometimes also called Septillions)

by Harry Dunn

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Most folks think in *Decades*  
When they contemplate their past;  
Not me – I think in *Septiles*,  
That's *seven* years before the mast,  
To identify each stage;  
A decade's much too long -  
Ask any kid aged seven and he'll tell you  
That he's already come of age  
And a seven-year-old kid  
Couldn't possibly be wrong.

So, would you like to hear some recollections  
From *my* first seven years -  
Let's call it *septile number one* -  
Which, on reflection  
Seem to make more sense today  
Than they did when I was young:  
Little things, to others unimportant,  
Were recorded in my infant brain  
Despite their lack of portent  
While much bigger issues have dropped out:  
These days, of course, forgetfulness is rife  
And such things are quick forgotten,  
So I'm frequently in strife.

At the end of *septile two*,  
At fourteen I left school  
Knowing all I needed,  
To get a job and pay my way,  
And more or less succeeded,  
But around age twenty-one,  
The end of *septile three*,  
More schooling was clearly needed,  
So back I went three nights a week,

Uni High, Footscray Tech, RMIT  
And the Adult Education Centre  
Down there in Flinders Street  
So, on to *septile four*,  
The twenty-ones to twenty-eights.  
Living in the sinful city  
And sharing flats with mates,  
Then six months overseas  
Doing the Grand Tour,  
Common in those days of cruises, cheap,  
YHA, five bob a night and companionship aplenty,  
Then *septile five* began and I went back to work and school,  
To learn at the age of thirty  
What the smarties seemed to know  
When they were less than twenty.

Then marriage, kids and work,  
All the way to *septile nine*,  
And well into my sixties;  
It all happened rather quickly,  
We had our share of luck and fun,  
Security and satisfaction,  
Then one day retired from work,  
Hung up the boots, put down the starter's gun,  
And slowing down a fraction,  
Departed Gotham City and moved to Inverloch,  
Joined the Bowls Club, IHS, U3A and Probus  
Made some friends, played some bowls, drank some beer  
And all in all - enjoyed the interaction.

So now, at the end of *septile twelve*,  
Approaching eighty-four,  
A dozen septiles done and dusted,  
What chance of completing just one more?  
Now, let me see,  
That would make me ninety-one  
If my maths can still be trusted,  
But the ageing process can be ruthless  
And I'm now faculty-deficient -

Hard of hearing, short of sight.  
Forgetting names, missing games,

Troublesome and toothless,  
And that's only just a sample  
Of my geriatric claims.  
As I said, this ageing process  
Can be cruel and ruthless.

So, what would I be like in another seven years,  
And would my poor missus be driven to distraction,  
And would she be sorely tempted  
To feed me *special mushrooms*  
With my bowl of curried horse,  
And if she did, would it be regarded  
As a loving farewell gift  
Or would it be considered  
Another wicked malefaction  
To cut some troublesome old reddy  
Quietly adrift?

Well, let me tell you now,  
As I fill this little space,  
She has my full permission  
To perform this final *coup de grace*,  
This act of grace and mercy  
If ever she observes the awful signs -  
Never mind the controversy -  
Of that ultimate old-age indignity,  
The very, very worst  
The one that needs an adult nappy -  
If the kids don't get me first.