

Lines

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Wistfully and freely (♩=120)

I like to buy shirts of a tight cot-ton weave That would last me for years if I'd learn not to
grow. My bi-ceps and fore-arm still fit in the sleeve, But my waist has ac-quired a new
thick-ness, and so I at-temp-ted the task of un-do-ing the darts Where the ta-per-ing
forms were no co-py of me, But my work was too rough, and the eye doc-tor's charts Just con-
-firmed that the stit-ches were too hard to see. As I touch the soft Ox-ford cloth, some-times it
hurts To hold in my fin-gers this proof that time pas-ses. I have tra-ded the lines on the
backs of my shirts For the lines on the front of my glas-ses. As the bo-dy grows thic-ker, the
fab-ric grows thin-ner, Or picks up a stain from a mis-hap at din-ner. Now I find my sup-
-ply of the ol-der shirts dwin-dles, So I look at what's new from the looms and the
spin-dles And the sew-ing ma-chines. As I browse at the ta-bles, It is hard not to laugh at the
words on the la-bels: "Tra-di-tio-nal", "Com-fort", "Ex-e-cu-tive fit" Words of pride for the
man who's been slow to ad-mit That if he bought the ta-pered, its seams just might split.

Complete words are on the other side

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I like to buy shirts of a tight cotton weave
That would last me for years if I'd learn not to grow.
My biceps and forearm still fit in the sleeve,
But my waist has acquired a new thickness, and so
I attempted the task of undoing the darts
Where the tapering forms were no copy of me,
But my work was too rough, and the eye doctor's charts
Just confirmed that the stitches were too hard to see.

As I touch the soft Oxford cloth, sometimes it hurts
To hold in my fingers this proof that time passes.
I have traded the lines on the backs of my shirts
For the lines on the front of my glasses.

The doctor who measures my vision each year,
Does the test for glaucoma, and looks through the eye
Says I can't accommodate both far and near;
It's a quite common problem when forty goes by.
I need two kinds of help from the lensgrinders' arts.
I could keep them in separate frames and then switch,
But I've both in each lens, ground in two separate parts:
I look up to go driving or down to unstitch.

As I touch the soft Oxford cloth, sometimes it hurts
To hold in my fingers this proof that time passes.
I have traded the lines on the backs of my shirts
For the lines on the front of my glasses.

As the body grows thicker, the fabric grows thinner
Or picks up a stain from a mishap at dinner.
Now I find my supply of the older shirts dwindles,
So I look at what's new from the looms and the spindles
And the sewing machines. As I browse at the tables,
It is hard not to laugh at the words on the labels:
"Traditional", "Comfort", "Executive fit" —
Words of pride for the man who's been slow to admit
That if he bought the tapered, its seams just might split.

I spent my twelfth birthday constructing grand dreams
Of the sports I'd excel in, the races I'd run.
I spent my last birthday undoing the seams
Of an old shirt that matched the new tie from my son.
And it's easy to see where his genes are my own,
For we have the same bodies and have the same eyes.
I've set six shirts aside; I shall leave them alone,
For in two or three years he will reach my old size.

As I touch the soft Oxford cloth, sometimes it hurts
To hold in my fingers this proof that time passes.
I have traded the lines on the backs of my shirts
For the lines on the front of my glasses.

The idea for this song was suggested by Bob Aaron at the time he got his first pair of bifocals

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This songsheet was prepared in 2018