Why old people talk about their operations

Because the body is vocal as it nears the end with its querulous list of aches and pains that makes relatives squeamish.

Because the body doesn’t care; everything grumbles and complains. The ground has become perilous.

Because our bowels are slow, the bladder stings and the body is a mulish obstinate thing, whose hipbones jut out beneath flaps of skin.

Because our log-jammed senses no longer grasp the complexity of things; sharp, subtle-edged. Birdsong is a smudge on soft-torn wings.

Because sentences meander and lose their way though we circle well-trod, familial terrain. Visitors get restless — we forget their names.

Because the heart anticipates that vital day when it can at last take rest and refrain from its incessant loyal pumping.

Because the roof has long begun to leak the pointing crumbles as soon as it’s fixed and nothing else prevails but this.

Lisa Jacobson
lisajacobson64@gmail.com
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