

A Day Out From the Nursing Home

Category: Poems

written by John Grey | June 30, 2017

John Grey ~

Your bones tremble.
Freedom no longer suits you.
Warm sun on skin feels wasted.
The smell of pine...
where's that old familiar ether?
So many active people on the sidewalk,
behind the wheels of cars.
Who have they come to visit?

Your daughter grabs your hand,
tries to pull you back into your old life,
but it's no longer known in these parts.
The house you grew up in...
well so she says.
The field where you played ball...
what's ball?
She even dares to kiss you.
But where's the pill to go along
with that painful touch of flesh?

She drives you to the ocean,
all waves, all the time,
but memory's tide long since ebbed.
She sits you on the sand,
points your head to the horizon.
But God stopped making horizons
years ago.

You can't wait until she pops you
back into the station wagon,
returns you to your chair in the common room,
between the card players
and the television zombies,
newspaper scanners and the ones that yap
how much they're loved by sons and daughters.

All you want in life
is stillness and strangers.
So you don't move.
So you don't know you.

About the poet:

John Grey is an Australian poet and US resident. He's recently had works published in [Sheepshead Review](#), [Studio One](#) and [Columbia Review](#) and has works upcoming in *Louisiana Review*, *Poem* and *Spoon River Poetry Review*.

About the poem:

"The patient in question is an aunt of mine who, toward the end of her life, preferred the company of her fellow nursing-home patients to the family she couldn't quite remember and the outside world that intimidated her."

Poetry editors:

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer