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Aging: my 71st Birthday

by Daniel Schwarz

I do not like to think about aging:

I dread: further reduced
sexual appetite, struggles
with forgotten names,
faces, highlighted by
embarrassing encounters
with people who remember a meeting
that is for me dim awareness or
blur, if it exists at all. When
reading obituaries of
friends, acquaintances, colleagues,
even celebrities, I think of others
who will read mine.

I could mention:

difficulty driving in dark,
watching tummy mysteriously
enlarge even though weight
doesn't change, painful knees
after tennis, digestive discomfort
if I eat more than usual.

Worse yet: fear that ideas
are not valued, words not heard,
presence disregarded, teaching archaic,
energy reduced. Yet nothing
inflects emptiness
more than lack
of grandchildren
as if setting sun
has no subsequent rising.

Yes, courage is required for
waging continuous struggle to
maintain mental faculties,
sustain sensory awareness
draw upon physical reservoir.
rage against coming of night,
savor every morsel of life,
delight in delicacy of each day,
love fervently, passionately.



Photo (detail) by Joel Kendall