
WHAT MATTERS IN THE END

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We ask *how we can help you?*
and *where does it hurt?*

We are taking vitals, making sure your lungs
are breathing, that your heart is beating, holding
your hands, those lands of blue-green
veins, with sun spots scattered like
rain drops, that's the first sign
of your collection of years, a process

of stages, of new normals, of changes.
so what do we do when your own words
begin to taste like a mouthful of ginger,
milk gone sour, and your own voice
your own voice when you speak is a foreign
country, a lost helpless country, etching out
unfinished stories:
you remember your Air Force
days, the baseball games, the first time
you saw Annie

Forgive us, there's nothing we can do when
your home's burning down, the home
your soul rests in is burning down, festering
that fire, anger you can't control, and
when visitors come in and you push them away,
you are sleeping more than you are awake,
we tell you it's normal to feel this way, it's
the new normal, not easy, and we don't know
when you can accept that
you are dying you are dying you're *dying*.

forgive me, it isn't easy to let go and maybe mortality
is an illusion, some haze makes us forget that
because our thoughts will sing back to you every day
haunting is something people seem to know how to do
but right now, we can hold your hands.