
HEALING ARTS: MATERIA MEDICA

The Story

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The old man, draped in a thin green gown
 Like a corporeal patina,
 Rested back, head heavy.
 He observed himself, outside of himself.

He had so much to say
 To the doctors hovering over him:
 Flashes in memory; here, now, he sees
 Himself as a sweet baby;
 Fat, happy, cuddled, loved.
 He becomes an active, curious boy;
 Sometimes mischievous, always honest.
 Years later, sturdy with the vigor of youth,
 Head bursting with optimism for the future,
 Heart swollen with first love.
 Then, a loyal husband,
 A doting young father,

Working for years in the service of others
 Happiest when home, his family around him.
 Later, a calming presence
 In the turbulent storm of heavy illness,
 Eventually carrying her out to a gentler sea.
 Finally, navigating similar waves,
 But with far different undercurrents,
 Thankful for the everlasting presence
 Of two generations, who dote on him
 As he did on them for so long.

He wanted to ask those in long white coats, standing silent,
 The words forming and then balanced gently on his lips:
 As life's final chapter comes to a close,
 What story will you tell?

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