

## Ghosts

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It is conceited to think elderly people aren't observant but it is true my aunt is going blind. My family and I are not close with her, do not see her much, so I guess that sort of makes us even. One day we drove to her town to take her to lunch for her birthday because she is our oldest living relative and because I don't think she has many friends.

My aunt has a good appetite but a poor stomach for driving so we chose a buffet restaurant close to her home. It overlooked a hedge maze with alopecia and it had a patchy decor. We ate our meals underneath a calico life ring, breathing mayonnaise (old shoes) while my aunt spoke to no one in particular about her failing eyes.

I asked her what she did in *the war*. She said that she sent her children to the country and that while she was working as a switchboard operator she separated from her husband. One day she rode her bicycle a very far distance, from London to somewhere else (so far that she had to stay the night there). I am not sure that what she did during the war is important to her. What is left of her vision is important to her though. It might be the most important thing in the world, except for her daughter who lives in Canada.

I think it is true that we remember 'the little things' and that they become what we think of a person. Once, my aunt won a brake light in a raffle but she didn't drive so she gave it to her brother (my grandfather). He didn't need it or want it but, at whatever cost, always avoided offence. To install the light it was 100 dollars plus all the little errands she made him feel he owed her that he would have done anyway.

Someone once thought it a consolation that my grandparents died while my brothers and I were young because we never knew their adult flaws. Part of me is consoled by this because I will always remember them fondly. On the other hand, that each of us feels we have to 'deal with' our aunt is partly because we begrudge their early deaths. We feel they died before their time, and when we see her, we wish it were them.

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