

The old woman across the street

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I hear a blaring voice, “Mom, just take your time,” so I step into the living room and glance out the window to see an old woman across the street, arm in arm with her daughter, shuffling and stumbling and staggering and swaying as they slowly mount three steps to the front door of their house. Finally, after four stops for breath and three for rest and two near-falls and one dropped quad cane, they arrive at the door. I exhale relief and mutter to myself, “I’m glad I’m not her, old and dependent and crumpled and hobbling,” and as I turn toward the bedroom, my arthritic right foot, the one that aches with the change of weather and the climb of stairs, catches on a rug and I tumble to the floor. Frightened and shaken, I cautiously rise, and when the imbalance is balanced, I trace a path on the wall like a

blind person fingering Braille. It is then that I realize, to my despair, that I too am old and shaky and shuffling and stumbling, and wonder how, and when, this senescence appeared.

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This article has been peer reviewed.

This is fiction.

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