

POEM



To be old

Julian Nangle

You wonder sometimes
how we survive –
our shortness of breath
ribs that ache
like trains stuck in tunnels
no air

you ponder on our sanity
our non-sequitur lines
escaping across family reunions
fields of pain
reminders, again and again,
of what was but is not now

did we squander
our chance to live full lives
was the pressure too much
to realise
dreams cradled since birth

no wonder we flounder
you think
but you are wrong

our struggles come with bells on
they are the reason we arise
with the sun each morning
they make sense of our achievements
against all odds
they are the fish on the ends of our rods
left dangling in the rivers of experience

we are not done
small smiles of understanding
absent of condescension
are all we require

one day you will see
will meet yourself in these tired eyes
one day maybe
you too will make that scream of delight
when someone acknowledges your courage.

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