Vacationing Ain’t Easy

It was overnight at a resort by a large lake. The hotel was luxurious, featuring indoor and outdoor pools heated by hot underground springs. A tourist destination, plentiful with restaurants and shops. It would be cool–it was early April and the lake was in the north, by the mountains. He looked forward to this overnight mini-vacation—and not.

Arnold was 80 and had created a nest in his apartment with his wife. It had whatever he needed—food, meds, wireless. A toilet with a lovely wooden seat. Leaving his apartment was hardly a big deal yet felt unsettling.

He had a routine, built around writing. He wrote flash fiction these days, posting it on websites. 5,000 hits and they kept increasing if he kept posting. Tiny numbers by normal standards but for Arnold a wonder. And he needed to be alone to write, and he would not be alone for the weekend. He would be surrounded by people who loved him. He felt guilt.

And he would no longer take the lead, drive. He always drove. But not now. Not after getting distracted once too often and shattering a tire on a curb. So he tried to be good about sitting in the back seat and his son-in-law driving. He slept through some of the drive (he had sleep apnea and, despite using a nightly breathing machine, was always tired. B-12 helped.) No one minded, they expected it. That was embarrassing.

Leaving the car for the hotel was like wading through mud. Everyone was cheerful, he tried to be. There was reason to be. They ate in a local restaurant which featured schnitzels, his favourite dish (not veal.) He ate half, they returned to the hotel and he slept through the night, troubled at feeling distanced.

He felt better the next morning (he would be going home?) He ate better, was talkative, tried to stay connected. They visited a small statue of the Budda in the middle of a forest, drank from its mountain stream. He felt better, then they were home and his wife asleep and he could write this.

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