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THE BUS STOP
By Tara Meddaugh
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LAWRENCE, a man in his 80s or so, stands at a bus stop. It is cold. He has just been to the grocery store. He talks to a woman in her 70s or so, who is also waiting at the bus stop.

LAWRENCE

I'm walking outta the damn food store carrying this bag of clementines—that's all I got. Not even pushing a damn shopping cart. And some idiot with a Korean car almost runs me over! Some teenage kid driving, no doubt. Spikey hair. Playing games on his damn iphone, no doubt. Some lady behind me yanks on my elbow. She's got her other hand holding some smart-allack kid's hand and she says, "You all right?" and he copies her like some damn parrot and says, "You all right?" I jerk her hand off my damn elbow and tell her and her smart-allack parrot-kid I'm fine. And I walk to the bus stop 'cause I gotta take a damn bus and I think, this kid almost runs me over and I'm the one who can't drive anymore?

(shakes his head)

Not right.

(pause)

Not right for a damn second.

(pause)

And I could tell you about how I served this country and put in my time and how Americans don't give a damn about the elderly, when we should be respected because we've been places and built things and dammit we're still here.

(pause)

But it's mostly...it gets me...because this is it.

(pause)

I don't get another chance.

(pause)

And you go through life and good things happen and bad things happen, but you always think you got time to change it. You'll find someone else to love. You'll eat better. You'll exercise. You'll buy another house...You'll get another chance.

(pause)

But then...your damn opportunities end. Because you're not getting smarter or nicer or richer. And your body isn't better either...Truth is, it's getting worse. And you're not sick. There's nothing really wrong with you. It's just never gonna get better. Because it's not meant to. Because you're old. But dammit, you don't feel that way on the inside.

(pause)

So you can't fix this. You can't get your license back....I had to take the bus for a year when I crashed my car into an exit sign during one of those damn blizzards on 81. It was damn cold waiting for the bus that winter, but I always knew I'd get the money and get another car. And I did. But this...

(pause)

I'm gonna be waiting for the damn bus wearing red checkered ear muffs my granddaughter gave me until the day I die.

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