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On Aging

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On aging

“There is always something rather sad about any performing artist who fails to realize that his career is over, but Marcel Marceau is riding on his name and past achievements to such a degree that one’s patience and pity is beginning to run out.”

Does aging give us wisdom? Does it make us stubborn?

A correspondence from the brain: The signals are lost in a neuron forest. Water floods into the organ’s grooves. But the mime continues to perform.

“[E]very action is grossly overplayed, every facial expression exaggerated and the humor is at least fifty years out of date. The characters cannot even read a newspaper without looking like rabbits chomping grass.”

Brain cells bloom. Brain cells go wild. A fistful of brain cells scatter in the wind.

“For me two hours of Marceau is like being trapped in a bar with an accomplished raconteur who insists on telling endless shaggy-dog stories.”

Bip is a child hunting butterflies. He joyfully runs from one end of the stage to another with an imaginary net, chasing after a bug.

Bip is an old man hunting butterflies. His exaggerated movements are heavy with sentiment. He tries to capture the butterfly in his hands, but he misses. You can see the dismay written on his face.

Marceau came up with the butterfly routine in a movie theater when he was fourteen. At the end of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, a butterfly flutters over the barrel of a soldier’s gun. As the young man reaches over the trench to touch the butterfly, he reveals himself to an enemy sniper.

Of course, cat and mouse is a game with consequences. Finally, Bip catches the butterfly. It dies in his hands as he tries to hold it. He brings it to his ears as if listening for a heartbeat.

Body of an animal is a heat engine. Death is a planned demise. The heart's a force-pump, growing bigger and slower as we age.