

I AM A TAB (TEMPORARILY ABLED-BODY)

Karen Sutherland

[Audio description (AD): This is a 30 second introduction for Karen Sutherland's film. I am a TAB temporarily abled body. This film is predominantly black and white video with chromatic aberrations or a red, green and yellow outline. The camera follows Karen walking on a path through a park. Karen wears a dark sweater and a light colored ankle length skirt. Occasionally she looks back or a bicycle drives by. A few images are superimposed over the footage of her walking through the park. Bare feet crossed hands, the profile of her face. A closeup of eyes and nose. I am a TAB (temporarily abled body). Karen walks.]

[Bird songs]

Movement. Walking. And dancing. These I love.

Fear that maybe I had bone cancer brought me to my physician last year when I noticed a new pattern. My left leg and my hip began to burn painfully after I walked for 45 minutes or so, [AD: Gray screen.] and I found myself limping home. [AD: Gray screen continues.]

Physician to physiotherapist, a diagnosis.

[AD: Karen looks around.]

Pelvic problems linked to childbirth years.

[AD: She continues to walk.]

"Really, just a matter of aging," she said. "A regimen of regular exercises, gentle exercises like leg lifts would help," she thought.

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And now I accommodate my aging pelvis and older person's leg. Now when I walk somewhere, I ensure that I will be able to rest along the way. [AD: Superimposed feet.] I choose my footwear with a question in mind: "Will my left hip object?"

Relief mixed with sadness. That's what I remember after my diagnosis. Thankfully I did not have a tumor, but I know the pain will be chronic, the first of a litany of age-related aches and pains.

All of me is aging. Always has been, of course, but in my 50s, I am now hyper aware of this uni-directional process. I'm cognizant of living with a low-grade dread. My body's new and growing limitations. Its changing aesthetic terrain.

[AD: Text on screen "And meanwhile time goes about its immemorial work of making everyone look and feel like shit." Martin Amis]

[AD: Karen walks.]

[Bird songs]

The reality, both in its visible and internal aspects, [AD: Gray haze.] as well as my increasing vigilance of my aging process is alarming to me. [AD: Superimposed images.] I don't want to be scrutinizing my body for new flaws, [AD: Topped hands] for sagging knees, its tummy, breasts and face. Wrinkles, liver spots, gray hairs, noticing that I have less energy.

[AD: Face profile.]

Ever aware of my age, I'd like to forget for now, [AD: Eyes and nose.] but not if I consider what forgetting means.

[AD: Photo closeup of eyes and nose.]

[Bird songs]

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[AD: Text on black screen. "The human body is not a thing or substance, but a continuous creation. It is an energy system which is never a complete structure; never static; is in perpetual inner self-construction and self-destruction." Norman O. Brown]

[AD: Credits, Karen Sutherland 2013. Project revision logo white capitals on black background typographical bullet between RE and Vision project revision.ca. Supported by the Center for Digital storytelling, red background white mind map. Project revisions circled from the Circle arrows and dotted lines connect various words.]