

Karen Neuberg – Two Poems

Losing Balance

I swagger away from my latest birthday, days before.
It's an act of rebellion, balance, and a mismanaged iliac.
All of which visit me daily in an attache' case designed
to look like a portal. Inside, my pills, which remind me
of my growing fragilities: difficulty navigating windy
corners or how direct engagement in the din of crowded
spaces is basically impossible. A sorrow that in dream
has settled deep into my chest leaves an impression
on waking. I stagger into day with the aid of caffeine.

But it's the morning news that serves to knock me over.

Journey

Mother goes off one day.
But not *'just like that'*.
First, she's leaves modest
clues along the path to
cliff's edge. She describes
a tugging as a gentle nudge
and begins giving away extra
shoes, small, colorful scarfs,
and favorite bracelets.
She points to the drawer
of important papers, names
the purpose of each.
In the hours before her actual
departure, mother tries to turn
back, to return, to push against.
She accepts a harness to keep
her from accidentally
wandering too far. When her
bed turns into the Grand Tour,
when she lies back and waves
to invisible people hanging
above her, still out of reach,
and speaks to them in a new
tongue that is older than me,
I want to take back all

the cruel moments I gave her
and replace them with every word
of thanks I have in me,
still have in me, that I'm still
saying and know I will
always be saying until my turn
and I hopefully see her waving to me
from what is no longer ceiling.

Karen Neuberg's recent poetry and collages appear in *Canary*, *Forage*, *Gyroscope*, *Otoliths*, and *S/tick*, among others. Her chapbook "*the elephants are asking*" is forthcoming in winter 2017 from Glass Lyre Press. She lives in Brooklyn, NY.