

Elizabeth Schultz

Visiting Jane In The Pioneer Ridge Health Center

Gnomic and static, she fills
the recliner, eyes alert in
her sagging face. A shoulder,
where the pain stabs, slopes.
This is where she is now,
incarcerated, but served.
With a grabber, she clutches
at a batch of newspapers.
She needs to stay informed
about local and international
weather, knowing she'll
never control either. Her ears,
elephantine, stretch forward
for info from those testing
her wits and obscure thresholds
of pain, from those paying
homage and bringing local
gossip and her garden's last
peonies, drooping. From deep
in her "I Love Paris" handbag,
she parcels out hidden chocolate-
covered, hazelnut toffee and
rewards herself for tolerating
fools, as her fingers knit
themselves over and over into
a basket holding only anxiety.

Following retirement from the English Department of the University of Kansas, **Elizabeth Schultz** remains committed to writing about the people and the places she loves, including Herman Melville, her mother, and her friends, Kansas wetlands and prairies, Michigan's Higgins Lake, Japan, where she lived for six years, and oceans everywhere. She has published two scholarly books, five books of poetry (three in 2014), a memoir, a collection of short stories, and a collection of essays. Her scholarly and creative work appears in numerous journals and reviews. She is a dedicated advocate for the arts and the environment.