

Bone Scan

by George Burns

Driving into the low morning sun,
I cannot see, so drive slow and on hope.
Like the sun rising, the traffic on Sunset,
Temescal, PCH and the 10 is just beginning
and it's easy to go with the flow and,
in the garage, I have my choice of parking places
and even have time to finish listening
to the podcast, *there is a great ambiguity
at the end of the world*, which I'm mis-
remembering, but not in a huge way.

It's close to 8 o'clock. The approaching hours
draw more and more cars in, filling the still
abundant slots. Ahead of me, a woman
almost runs to beat the last few minutes to her desk.

But I'm an old man. I no longer need to run,
so when I extend my wrist to the receptionist
to snap on the hospital band, I joke, *It's
like we're getting married* and I think
her laugh is real: Now that I'm old,
it's more relaxed around women.
Why did this take so long, I wonder

as I pull my keys, wallet and cell
out of my pocket then unwind my belt
from around my waist. At last I lie
on the scanning table waiting for the plate to
meander in its track above me,
gazing at my body, feeding on my bones.

That's it, she says. I'm surprised
it's happened so fast as I sit up
and feel a small cloud of vertigo
descend on my brain. *That's it*,
the nurse says and cuts my wrist band.

The world has begun to hum in my absence
and the freeway and its on-ramp are full
but moving; the sun is higher and
no longer a problem and I begin to
hum a zippety do-daw. The world
still has a place for me. Crowded,

but if I turn on my signal,
I can still squeeze in.

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