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## I am a camera with the shutter open

by Tina Blower

I am a camera with the shutter open. I look out of the window. The wind is rustling the leaves of the shrubs outside my window and I can see that today, the buds are beginning to open. Click. The clouds are large cotton-wool balls, big and frothy. The blueness of the sky is emphasised by their bright white.

Click. I hear the door handle turning and train my lens towards the sound. My daughter is here. I watch as she draws nearer the bed. She is wearing her pink blouse today and her beige trousers rustle as she sits down. I focus on her face as it comes closer. My children are getting old now and I can see the lines appearing around her eyes and mouth. I drink in her expression of love, pain, worry.

Click. She tells me a story about the grandchildren but I can only focus on her and her soft blue eyes. My baby. I have looked into those familiar eyes a million times and I still recognise the child beneath. I lie back and sit with her presence. I must have fallen asleep as she is no longer there. I look down at my withered hands that I can no longer use.

Click. They are still my hands but somehow they are no longer a part of me. All I am now is a series of images, clear and vivid. The crisp white of the hospital sheets and their folds, the plastic pouch suspended above my head reflecting the sunlight through its clear liquid contents. The droplets of liquid moving through the tube like beads into my veins. Faces that come and go, the jar of yellow, busy flowers next to my head, the large square white of the ceiling.

Most of the things I notice are not interesting or relevant to others but to me, now, they are everything. They mean that I am still present and I try to capture each image in a vain attempt to preserve that presence. I know that one day I will have to relinquish these snapshots but today, I am a camera with the shutter open.