

Extract from 'Sunday' short story published in *Seven Days* anthology

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Bones cracking, I ease myself up in my seat. I grapple with the controls, my fingers stiff, and finally hit the correct button to lever the chair into a reasonably upright position. I press the clockwise arrow and begin to slowly revolve so that I am facing the window. I am ready for the sun. The grey slanting half-light recedes, to be replaced by streaks of golden pleasure. I salute the sun with my hand, a girl-guide gesture that I learned in 1923 and used professionally until I retired from guiding nineteen years ago, following a scandal that I'd rather not mention.

I no longer *salute the sun* from the floor. Although I probably still could do the movement, I am not quite sure that I could make it back up again. B and I visited an Ashram in the sixties, when all of those things were exciting and new. We both learned yoga but Betty was always lazier than I and she did not continue with it.

I distinctly remember the last time I practised that movement. It was during my first week or so here in this establishment. They were checking on me every hour back then, as if they thought that I would try to escape or commit some destructive act on the furniture. I had been 'yoging' – as B used to call it – during the intervals between their little visits up until then, but somehow had timed it wrong that morning. As I reached the apex of the movement, there was a scuffle at the door and a shriek. "Oh my god she's fallen!" Suddenly, I was being man-handled from all directions by several young, uniformed women.

"Unhand me!" I shouted, "I'm fine." I attempted to get up unaided but what with fighting them off and confusion with my slippers, I *did* fall. So I played the part then of the frail old lady and allowed myself to be carried to a chair and given hot, sweet tea. Following that fall I have not attempted any yoga. I exercise my mind instead.

I take a sip of water. My small clip-on table is crowded with paraphernalia: the jug of cranberry that is far too acidic at this time in the morning, balsam tissues, playing cards, sweet wrappers, the silver-framed photograph of Betty with the Triumph. She did look rather stunning in the leather flying-jacket, her hair streaming behind her as she sat bolt upright in the sidecar. My darling girl. I miss her so, especially in the mornings.

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For more information about *Seven Days*, book cover image and where to buy the book, see my website at http://www.josiehenley.net/seven_days.html