



My father has lived on his own since the progression of my mother's Alzheimer's meant that he could no longer care for her.

My mother moved into a care home in November 2013. My father had been struggling to look after her for some time but would not acknowledge this despite countless conversations with me and my siblings.

My mother died in September 2019.

Since then my father has been living by himself coping with the grief of losing my mother, the excess of time he had to fill as he no longer visited her, the challenges of aging, and in addition, the enforced isolation as a result of covid lockdowns.



I speak to my father most days.

He sits on this chair in the hall, a re-upholstery project started by my mother twenty or more years ago, and we talk about not very much. Our conversations are very repetitive but he is always grateful that I call.

I suggested to him that he should get a new chair knowing full well what his answer would be. As I suspected, he didn't see the need for a new chair.

I tell my father he knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing. I don't think he knows what I mean.



Gardening is a frequent topic of conversation and hedges in particular.

It's only recently that I realised that for my father, gardening is a constant battle against nature. There is a sense of achievement when he has cut back the hedges and filled numerous green bins, tinged with a degree of frustration that his neighbours do not seem to share his passion for hedge-trimming.

Thinking about my childhood I remember my father spending hours mowing grass, I can't remember any growing, just cutting.

I gave my father a cordless hedge-trimmer due to his poor eyesight. Now he can cut his hedges without the risk of electrocuting himself.

I know my parents loved each other but their marriage was very unequal.

My father does not like being challenged. During my mother's illness this created a lot of anger and resentment.





My father has had poor eyesight for many years. He insists his eyesight is good, taking everything into account.

I say to him, you are blind in your right eye, and only have 20% vision in your left.

He says, yes, but apart from that my sight is ok.

His sight is not ok.

Without his magnifying glass he cannot read.



Sun damage.





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Books he can't read, a calculator he can't see and tins that he doesn't use or need. Junk neatly arranged.

I say to my father he should throw out stuff he does not need. He gets defensive and the conversation goes nowhere. I don't know why I even suggest it.

I realise that my father is increasingly perplexed by the present and seeks comfort in the past. His reluctance to part with things he no longer needs is part of this.



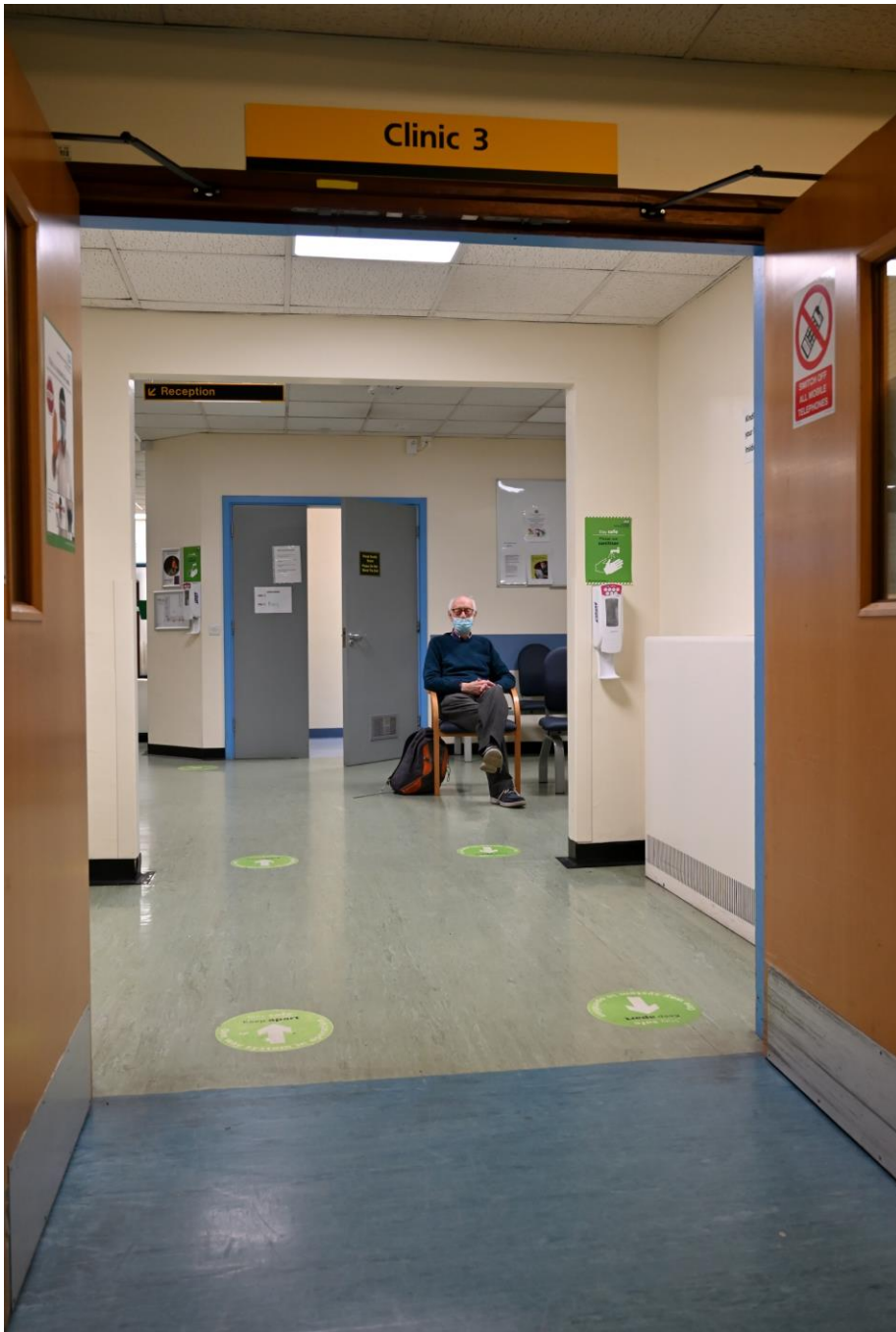
My brother and sister and I bought my father a new DAB radio a couple of years ago.

He insisted it was faulty and could only pick up one station.

After showing him several times, I'm still not sure he understands how to use it.

When I visit him, if he is listening to Radio 3 or Classic FM it is on the television.

As long as I can remember he has been uncomfortable with technology.



We visited the Eye Clinic. Only patients were allowed in the waiting area.

The doctor patiently explained what treatment was possible, the potential benefits and the risks.

My father is reluctant to go ahead with surgery that could improve the sight in his left eye. Having listened to the doctor I understand my father's reluctance.

Ultimately he will lose the sight in his left eye but his thinking is he might die before that happens so it is not worth having an operation and taking the risk of losing it now.

I think if I were in his position I would probably do the same.