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The Smoking Mirror Will Express Things As They Are

At 13, you will start hating your body;
it will be perfectly normal, horrible,
& spontaneous.

Fortunately, you will have your first
Cigarette on the cracked calcium
Carbonate of your bathroom floor--

A Camel, that promises to never
Get on your nerves.

At 17, you will date a much older
Man to whom you will lose your
Virginity; it will sting, then pound,

Like a cymbal falling on your foot forever.

When you complain, he will say,
I've been trying to find a nectarine
in this town for approximately
290 Hours!*

There will be boys your age you want to kiss.

When you are 19, e.e. cummings
Will die: Let's live suddenly without
Thinking [!]*

You will switch to Tareytos because
You will be hungry for flavor.

At 23, you will wear rings on all
Your fingers & sing about mothers
Forced out of their villages. In quiet

Protestation, you will remove your
Top at Howard Johnson's, then order
Red Jell-O with whipped cream
& a cherry.

When you are 28, Neil Armstrong
Will land on the moon & you will
Have a mystical experience while
Taking a perfectly elliptical shit.

At 30, you will get married.
"Finally!" your mother will yap,
Yap. Yap.Yap.

You will adore/despise her.

He will be a madman, which
You will learn too late, means
Madison Avenue, not madcap,
Irreverent, witty, or thrilling.

Together, you will sip coffee
In orange & pink cups, & go
To EST where it will be confirmed

Your body is disgusting, you are
Your body, & should be grateful.

At 35, your husband will have
Affairs with girls named Debby,
Dawn, & Sunshine, you will

Sit Indian-style on your marriage bed
& memorize lines from Sylvia Plath,
"I am not cruel only truthful..." **

At 36, you will have a daughter
& name her Debby, Dawn, or
Sunshine.

You will yearn for her creamy skin,
Shiny eyes, & impossibly glossy
Hair, which just smells so good;

You will fret & wonder why
Your hair doesn't smell so good.

As payback, you will constantly
Send her to her room where
She will brood & smoke Tareytons--

The taste worth fighting for.

At 43, your husband will
Leave you for a tidy blonde
Of 22.

You will go to singles bars,
Wear hot-pants, & smoke Kools
Because there's only one way
To play it.

Rapidly, your skin will become
Craggy & people will call you
Ma'am. This will sound like

They're reprimanding you,
But only because they are.

At 50, you will consult with
A therapist who will inform you

That your crucial authenticity
Is existential, & you do not really
Exist; not really.

This will not be the advice you
Were hoping for, so you will
Get cats. They will know

You are authentic; your place
Will stink of authenticity.

Your daughter will visit with her
Much older husband. She will no
Longer be glossy, & will have
Developed cellulite.

You will decide you love her.
She will despise/adore you.

When her hubby makes grab for you,
You will be giddy with delight--who
Wouldn't be? (You still have it).

Nevertheless, you will scold him.
"How dare you!"

Later, on the ruptured mollusk shells
& flinty corals of your bathroom
Floor, you will give him your body.

At 58, you will be diagnosed with
Invasive ductal carcinoma & have
Your breasts lopped off; being

Flat chested is wildly exhilarating,
Like being a kid again.

At 67, you will buy a little condo in
Queens with the money you will get
From half your husband's pension plan.

Finally! Your mother will yup,
Yup. Yup. Yup.

You will look down & see she is falling
Apart; you will feel responsible.

At 75, you will experience heaviness
At the center of your chest. This will
Last for more than a few minutes.

You will ignore it, although you've
Broken out in a cold sweat & feel
Lightheaded, like being drunk
On a snowy day.

At 86, your abnormal cells will
Divide uncontrollably, & you will
Join the Hemlock Society where

You will meet many kind, interesting,
Dying people.

Bedbound, sedated, & on truckloads of
Barbiturates, you will reread old favorites--

Bertha, the mad woman in the attic, finally
Offs herself, & Rochester, now blind & with
One hand is free to marry Jane. Later,

He will recuperate, which you will
Find unfair and unreasonable.

Dorothea, on the other hand, will marry
Handsome Ladislav. That took you long
Enough silly twit, you will say, & really
Mean it.

Your hospice caretaker will think you are
Talking about her as she feeds you those
Last blasted handfuls of Secobarbital.

You will be grateful, grateful, so very grateful.

*Frank, David. *Facebook* Post. 2015

**Cummings, e. e. "Let's Live Suddenly Without Thinking." *100 Selected Poems*. 1959

***Plath, Sylvia. "Mirror." *The Collected Poems*. 1961