

Captions:

END OF LIFE: LIFE UP TO THE END

Photographic documentary by
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Made at Thal Marmoutier in Alsace, France - June 2013



Photo 01 - **Admission.** Mr Lurlaro, 82 years old, comes from Puglia in Italy. A qualified locksmith, he came to Strasbourg in 1960 “for a job”. He has been ill for the past three-and-a-half years and lives alone; his wife, also ill, lives in a home. He was determined to have this holiday. Holding his arm is Solange, a nurse: *“palliative care is not about simply helping someone to die”*.



Photo 02 - **On the roof of the world.** Francois and Alain gaze at Strasbourg below them from the highest point of the Haut Barr hills. François, 66, became a volunteer after a carer in banking. He wanted to do something worthwhile and because he has always had a caring instinct; he wants at all costs to avoid people thinking that what he is doing is extraordinary. *“It is not a question of false modesty, because I’m not doing this for nothing, for course. You’re not expecting anything in return, but I’m sure that you always end up with some sort of reward. What you get in return is magnificent; I have received much more than I have ever given.”*



Photo 03 - **Wide load.** Every outing requires preparation and organization. The organizers’ car follows the van, which follows the “Hospitalor” lorry. No-one tires as the convoy crosses the countryside.



Photo 04 - **Saint-Francis of Assisi.** Mr Lurlaro with Denis, one of the carers. *“The routine at home is cigarettes and television. Here, I’m doing things. And if I die tomorrow, what of it? You need to enjoy the present.”*



Photo 05 - **The little prince.** Mr Zimmer enjoying a promenade along the Saverne Canal with Sandrine and Denis, his carers. *“It’s great because I’m surrounded by wonderful people”.*



Photo 06 - **Here and now.** *“You really need to seize the moment, you can’t survive only on memories”*, Cécile Daout, head nurse (in the foreground). *We all live in the present.”*



Photo 07 - **The little girl from Neuhoff.** Denise Jung, 50, worked as a materials handler and played as goalkeeper for a well-known local women’s football team. She has been on long-term sick-leave since 2000. In her own words she has *“a big mouth and a warm heart”*. It would be an understatement to describe her youth and her life as difficult. Vivacious and curious, this little girl from Neuhoff, one of Strasbourg’s grittiest districts, is fascinated by the Rohan Castle in Saverne. *“It is part of who I am and I have nothing to be ashamed of”.*



Photo 08 - **A delicate touch.** The cloisters of a convent in Saverne. Dr Vignon says she loves *“the ease with which the patients and careers speak of death; a degree of familiarity, which, strange as it may seem, brings about a certain impression that it’s not so serious”*. This palliative care unit is proud of its mission to accompany patients until their death. *“Our experience is not some sort of pre-ordained horror story”.*



Photo 09 - **Recreation.** In the courtyard of the Petites Sœurs Franciscaines' respite home, Thal-Marmoutier. Noëlle likes being part of the group: *"I don't say much but I feel happy. It is good to hear them laugh"*.



Photo 10 - **Up to the end.** Anne, Denise and Marie-Rose, the art-therapist. Can you imagine laughing in a palliative care unit? It doesn't take very much, just a game of Scrabble or Trivial Pursuit.



Photo 11 - **Shared glances.** Arriving at the Sainte-Croix Zoo in Rhodes. Wheelchairs meet prams, Noëlle's eye catches that of a child. Who is the more intrigued of the two?



Photo 12 - **Mr Zimmer's goat.** Sainte-Croix Zoo. Mr Zimmer has fun in the goat pen. During the course of the afternoon he says *"it was a good idea to come here, I can feel my feet. If only I could manage to move my toes...."* ». Whether true or false, who cares? He felt something and it makes him happy.



Photo 13 - **Take-off.** Anne, 54, has been in treatment for the past three years. The vacation *"did a world of good. In the space of a day and a half, I had three square meals. That hasn't happened for the past two months."* She shows her morphine patches which are there to calm the pain caused by her arthritic growth: *"funnily enough, it hurts much less since I started. What word comes to mind? Rebirth. Eight months ago, I had a brain scan that scared the wits out of me. Since then, I've been in a trance. At last I've realised that I can actually walk, I can eat. That I can do lots of things that I didn't think I could. I realise that I need the presence of others because they stimulate me. I was resigned to letting myself die, that it wasn't worth living any more. Psychologically, I saw myself dying in three months. I had no more energy, no strength. Now, I've have it back. I'm back to life, back to real life"*.



Photo 14 - **Windows on the courtyard.** An evening in Thal-Marmoutier. Cards on the left, painting on the right. Marie-Rose, art therapist, runs the workshop. *“The kingpin of a different way of treating people, of caring for them, of helping them regain self-confidence and self-esteem, not to mention improving their artistic technique”,* as Dr Véronique Vignon says on the subject of artistic therapy.



Photo 15 - **Parallel.** Alain is a loner. He stays on his own during the visit to Rohan Castle in Saverne. Cécile Daout, head nurse, stays with him, neither too close nor too distant: *“we are between equals, because we share everything: nights, activities, meals. The relationship is obviously different, everyone takes care of everyone each other. Everyone cares for everyone else”.*



Photo 16 - **A hug.** Solange, a nurse, brings comfort by physical contact with the fragile and vulnerable bodies. On mornings like this, Noëlle prefers to register for the well-being workshop rather than going to the market.



Photo 17 - **Cinema paradiso.** Consumed by the video of Lalique’s production methods, they are fascinated watching the glass-blower at work.



Photo 18 - **Captive.** Lalique's museum bookshop, Noëlle is engrossed reading. She raises her head to say "*I dream of being locked up in a bookshop*".



Photo 19 - **I remember it well.** Mr Lurlaro gets the blues listening to Bernard's accordion. He used to dance with his wife, now in a home, in times past.



Photo 20 - **Partytime.** There is dancing, laughing and singing. "*What idiot said that there is nothing happening here?*" Allain Leprest.



Photo 21 - **The bowling ground.** Mr Lurlaro cheers up falling upon the bowling ground in spite of the inevitable sadness he feels during the final preparations before leaving. He hasn't played for the past six years. Just being here is recreation in itself.



Photo 22 - **Life is a fragile thing.** Back to Toussaint Clinic in Strasbourg. Says Mr Lurlaro: « *For me, the clinic is like a family. The vacation is the same but better* ».