

Captions :

MALU

Photographic essay by
Fabrice LEROUX

**All the photographs were taken between 2009 and 2012 at Saint Mitre les Remparts,
France, with the exception of four taken at Martigues hospital.**



Photo 01 - 30/08/2009 00:29

Malu has her character. The television is on all the time; she loves detective series, and the news, even if she does sometimes confuse fiction and reality. The volume is up high, to the extent that it is often impossible to record our conversations. She wakes frequently at night.



Photo 02 - 02/09/2009 12:05

Malu goes out from time to time – but never outside the house and it has been like that for the past 20 years. I remember her when she walked but now she is afraid of falling so she goes into to living room in her wheelchair. She sees us going about our lives there, perhaps it is better than the TV?



Photo 03 - 05/09/2009 16:23

She eats only coffee creams, never chocolat, never cold nor hot but warmed for precisely 30 seconds in the microwave. Otherwise it's a mixture of banana, milk and boudoir biscuits, again heated for 30 seconds in the microwave. And it has been like that for almost 20 years (there's a lot to be said about a balanced diet but what Malu eats works miracles just like on Okinawa).



Photo 04 - 06/09/2009 17:56 17:57 18:15

With Anna-Eva, her grand-daughter. A family photo album: she still reads some of the newspaper with a magnifying glass and particularly loves mail-order catalogues (especially those selling kitchen gadgets, for whatever reason).



Photo 05 - 24/10/2009 18:28

Like a cat in the warmth of late autumn.



Photo 06 - 24/02/2010 15:51 15:52 15:53

You're still bright enough to follow the subtitles but that doesn't stop you from asking me about "up there" which frightens you. So I pull the curtains half closed, covering the "danse of the branches". You seem calmer.



Photo 07 - 04/02/2010 15:57

Bouts of anxiety happen regularly, and I can do nothing to help.



Photo 08 - 20/05/2010 17:39

You speak less and less, or sometimes when you do speak it is somewhat confused, and I'm not sure that I understand. Maybe I understand only what I think I want to hear.



Photo 09 - 20/05/2010 21:26

The famous banana-milk-boudoir biscuit mix in an NBA cup. « Keeping up with the young ones ».



Photo 10 - 07/09/2010 23:21

The holidays are over, time to sleep. Your grand-daughter Anna-Eva comes to wish you good night.



Photo 11 - 08/09/2010 13:04

Seen from outside your room. I'm not sure if you recognized me. I'm not one of the people from outside, I'm Fabrice.



Photo 12 - 06/02/2011 20:12

You are always cold, in spite of the heating. So the blankets pile on your bed.



Photo 13 - 25/03/2011 15:30

In winter you like to be at the fireside, you tell me to be careful, I'm a real firebug. « Ah isn't he great! »



Photo 14 - 15/10/2011 17:31 Martigues city

At the hospital, the groaning doesn't stop, the pain is everywhere.

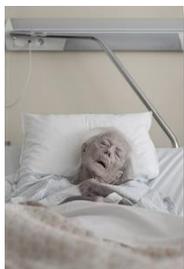


Photo 15 - 18/11/2011 17:40

You really don't recognise anyone anymore, neither your grand-daughter nor your own daughter who you always recognised and called for. We want to believe that a smile is a sign that you know who we are.



Photo 16 - 24/12/2011..... 01:21

How can a human body go through that ? 97 years old twelve days ago, 34 kilos and still holding on.



Photo 17 - 02/01/2012..... 19:03
What are you dreaming about Malu ?



Photo 18 - 02/01/2012 21:36
They may not appear in these photos but the helpers who come every day to our home are fabulous, in spite of the curses, the shouts and the attempts to scrape them (Malu is terrible with the staff). They fight each day against her humours. And they win her over by taking time to massage her, in spite of their overly long days. We thank them so much.



Photo 19 - 13/01/2012 15:33
Always on the razor edge between shade and light, between life and death...the astonishing Malu. You left us discreetly, while I was away on business; I will always keep this look in my mind...



Photo 20 -
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