

## Synopsis:

# FINAL DAYS IN THE COUNTRY

Photographic essay by

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This is not a documentary.

It is not about the daily life of my mother.

It is a collection of portraits of her, in the places that she used to frequent: her bedroom, her car, a small bit of lawn. Places that became smaller and smaller as time went by.

She died in January 2015.

She lay down on her bed and her heart stopped beating. I think she felt that the time had come.

She had been suffering for the past ten years from an insidious illness, which affected her mental state but not her body, and which continued to advance, slowly but irrevocably: her illness was diagnosed as fronto-temporal dementia.

I can't really say when it began.

For sure, her character did change at the start, and she started doing some odd things like closing herself in behind closed the shutters every day from five o'clock on, or spending the afternoon in her car. Towards the end, she even ate in the car, transforming her Twingo into a larder. I think she probably felt reassured in spaces that were ever more confined.

She also lost the use of words.

She still played cards and Scrabble. The words she found were more and more poetic: Skelet/Raspadi/Flao/Exilant/Zobi...

In order to stay with us (at least that's what I think) and to give the impression that she was taking part in the conversation, she used to repeat the last few words that ended our sentences.

Whenever we spoke to her, it seemed that there was distress in her eyes. She would concentrate for a few moments, and, worn out by the effort, without having been able to put two words together, she would smile broadly and leave.

Nonetheless I still remember a phrase which she repeated often: "I can't cope any more".

On one occasion, I took her at her word and replied that we were there to support her.

And at that moment, her face changed. It was as if the veil of her illness had been pulled aside for a moment, and she said: "It's important".

It was then that I started to take photos of her.

I think that those moments when I was taking her photo brought fleeting joy to her by creating the unexpected during her day.

Furthermore, even if the expression on her face is most of the time that of a lost old lady, in my photos I find that she manages to recover some of the life force that she once had.

I can't explain the little miracle of photography that seems to retain some of the lucidity that my mother lost.