

Lanfen

Lanfen is a Chinese musician who is at a Hospice Day Centre where she has unexpectedly made friends with Jim.

I know what Jim is going to say when I see him. 'Have you been playing Lanfen? You know that if we don't keep playing, we may as well give up the ghost'.

We have promised each other that we will do a duet at the hospice, but we still haven't done it and Jim is not looking too good. I thought I was too young to go there. That I didn't want to be sitting with the kinds of people that found themselves trapped in a place like that. That there wouldn't be anybody there like me to talk to.

I've told my doctor I don't want to know what they think is going to happen to me. I don't trust them anyway. My sister died two weeks after an operation she was told would add years to her life. And everybody knows the health system is a mess. But I know I am not an easy patient. It took me months to agree to having help at the flat. Who needs strangers coming in and telling you what you should or shouldn't be doing?

My mother was a Buddhist who spent her last days breathing and meditating through her illness but that's not for me. I need to be able to keep taking risks, that's what Jim understands and nobody else does. All good musicians know you have to take risks to discover anything. It's in those discoveries, however small they are, where life is lived.

You look at all the pills and you wonder, are they keeping you alive or are they stopping you living?