Section C: Poetry

Old Flame

By Linda Chase

He turns my hand in his hand
as if to catch the light,
separating my fingers
to see my rings, one by one.
Questions and answers follow –
country, stones, when, from whom
and then my other hand
because this ritual has been
going on for fifty years
and there are no surprises,
as he counts the parts of me
and the decorations I choose.

But today I wear a bracelet
he has never seen before,
knowing that it's to his taste,
that it will spark new attention
beyond his routine inspection.
Between the larger stones,
sit dashes of orange abalone,
keeping spaces in between
irregular chunks of turquoise.
He fingers them around my wrist
and I'm a girl again, fluttering
through her jewellery and her life.

Q27. In *Old Flame*, how does Linda Chase present feelings about getting old?