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?