

RIP, Laura's Vagina

Your vagina is beginning to devitalize,
the doctor explained, when I asked him why
I had had so many urinary tract infections lately.
The first thing I thought was that I should say
No, your vagina is devitalizing, because I have
two teenage sons, and that is what passes for wit
in our house. But then I got lost in the fact
that he didn't, in fact, have a vagina,
and I thought I should point that out instead
because in some circles—say, mine—
that would be an insult. Then, in the little
room inside my mind where Dorothy Parker
was holding court at the Algonquin,
I thought maybe *devitalize* is just a medical term,
give the guy a break. But I didn't even know
this man. Couldn't he just give me a prescription
and say something vague about aging?
What about euphemism? I guess *devitalize*
was one because he went on to more vividly
explain that my tissues were, frankly, deteriorating.
At that point, I was thinking *But you haven't even
seen the area in question* and *How did you get
this far without knowing how to talk to women?*
Devitalize reminds me of *de-ice* which is what
I was doing just before this tricky moment
at the Urgent Care. My son was late to Algebra
because it's really cold and it took a while
to clean the car. And at 8:00 the door
where he usually goes in automatically closes,
so I had to take him around to the front,
and he dropped his phone in the snow
and it got run over, so now there's a crack
in the screen. He wants me to replace it,
but I said *No, it still works.*