His Wednesday Jacket

Linda Wagner

On Wednesdays he dons his best attire and slips into his mustard colored jacket, worn away at the sleeves, countless tea stains down the front.

He leaves his lifeless house and takes the trolley downtown. He registers at the front desk, checks with the caregiver and waits by his wife's bedside until she wakes. On Wednesdays he tells her stories from their past and reads haikus from the worn and discolored pages of her book. She always inquires of the Emperor and talks of rides she takes on rickshaws through cities he knows do not exist. On Wednesdays he makes piping hot
tea and prepares rice
with slices of ginger. He
plays games of *Mah Jong*

with weathered tiles while
she complains of barking dogs
and the sun's bright rays.

On Wednesdays he wishes
she would remember his name.