

Amy-Lloyd Plax

by Gita M. Smith

They leave their marks like fingerprints, these amyloid plaques.

When the doctor said the words, I heard Amy-Lloyd Plax, hyphenated, like the architect: Frank-Lloyd Wright.

"Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd Plax invite you to the wedding of their daughter Amy," I giggled in the examining room.

Those rusty finger print shapes, they form a blackout curtain between me and yesterday -- the CSI tv show plot or my breakfast choices. They form a wall between now and everything that happened before or in another place.

People say there's *nothing* wrong with me, that I'm still sharp. A friend reads a story I wrote over the weekend and says it isn't possible that I'm going downhill. That's because she doesn't see the fury of my effort to find a word among the tangles and pull it out. I go through long silent struggles to recall names that used to bubble up irrepressibly.

It took 90 seconds to recall "irrepressibly." Sometimes I just delete the sentence that exhausts me.

I think about the PET scan, its bright places and its dark ones, but the month-old picture I recall may not even be a true map of my brain today. The rusty fingerprints might already have spread wider, erasing in their path the tunes to folk songs that I sang at summer camp and the names of boyfriends, once so crucial to my happiness.

PET scans have expiration dates, like milk. Stand still too long, and oops! That photo's spoiled.

Amyloid plaques are fuzzy spots in amongst the sharply defined lines and crisp shapes of neurons and dendrites; they remind me of crystallized brown sugar on the surface of a flan. It took me two minutes to remember goddamn "flan."

No one knows exactly what degree of memory loss corresponds to what amount of plaque-ness.

When I no longer know you, what signal will you give to remind me

that you and I once loved?

Love. Amy Lloyd marries Frederick Plax on a private island, far away from everyone else, just as darkness closes in around her.

