

IF I HAVE ALZHEIMER  
I WANT YOURS TO BE THE ONLY MEMORY I KEEP  
By Anuj Guruacharya, PhD

When I am in my 60s,  
Maybe my lack of sleep during my adult years will start punishing me.  
Maybe I will one day forget what city we live in.  
As years go by, maybe I will forget I have children, and that I need to go  
to the toilet when I want to urinate.  
Maybe it was in my genes,  
Molecules passed on from generation to generation.  
Maybe it was in the way I slept late and woke up early every day for the  
past 20 years.  
But when the disease happens,  
I am fine with forgetting my name, my father's name, and my brother's  
name.  
When every morning I will wake up,  
I might wake up in a nursing home for special geriatrics like me.  
In late stages of Alzheimer I might wonder where I am and who are the  
nurses around me,  
But I want your memory to be locked in a special locker deep in my  
brain,  
So deep that even the plaques and tangles of Alzheimer can't get to it.  
Locked in that box,  
Will be my memories of you,  
When we climbed icefields of Alaska or  
When we spent months in a dark damp basement in Oklahoma City.  
Locked in that box will be my memories of my mother,  
When we walked through the inner harbor in Baltimore on a sunny day,  
Or when she screamed for me to come to the dinner table during my  
high school years.  
Locked in that box will be my first memories of seeing ice fall from the  
sky with my brother and my father when I was 5.

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And even if I lose all that ,  
Somewhere trapped in a synapse between two neurons,  
Forever zipzapping tiny electrical pulses in a remote corner of my brain,  
Even if I lose all those memories, when I have Alzheimer's,  
I want yours to be the only memory I keep,  
Of your name and the sacrifices you have made for me.