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I Must Write It Down

by MaryPat Campbell

What's that round thing they put on your arm? It's sticky like a label...they keep telling me I have to wear it and change it every other day. But which day is every other day? I can't remember which day it was before, or which day it's going to be tomorrow. I think today is Monday, or maybe it's Thursday, or maybe it's tomorrow already.

And then there's that box with all my pills inside. It says all the days every week on that, and each day has three smaller boxes inside the bigger one. It's supposed to help me remember to take my pills after every meal. I can't remember now where I put it. Have you seen it anywhere?

I'm hopeless at remembering. They make me do those silly memory tests when I go to the hospital. It's not fair, I go to have my...what do you call it, checked out and then they show me all those pictures and quiz me on them. It's ridiculous. It was animals last time I went. That woman, she's so annoyingly polite and bossy at the same time, holding up pictures and asking me in her sing-song voice, "can you tell me what this is?"

Of course I know what it is, does she think I'm stupid? One of those big ones that live in Africa, very tall with long legs. You know the one I mean. It's just I can't remember its name. It's so hot in Africa, and I get so frustrated, and the woman is endlessly patient with me, she drives me up the wall with her smiles and her patience. I feel like telling her to sod off and walk out.

I suppose memory is the thing you forget with, just like legs are the things you can't walk with, if they're not working properly I mean. I don't work properly any more either. On some days I do, not every day. Every other day I can...and then sometimes I can't. I used to work in the...the office. You know the one, half way down the high street, on the corner opposite Tesco's. I'll show you next time we go shopping.

I have an appointment, I think it's Wednesday, at the hairdresser. I should ring them up and ask, just to make sure when I'm supposed to be there. I should've written it down so as not to forget. Where did I put my pen? There's usually one in the top drawer. Ah, here it is. That's the pen Joey left behind the last time he was here.

I get Joey mixed up with Dan, they look so alike. I caught Dan smiling at me when I called him Joey, the last time he popped in for a cuppa. I knew then I'd got it wrong, but I couldn't remember I should've called him Joey instead of Dan. I must write it down, Joey is Dan's son. Dan is Joey's dad.

And then there's my own dad. I miss him terribly, when will he come home I wonder. I haven't seen him for such a long time, weeks and months and years. Maybe he died, I can't remember. How will I know if he's dead or just gone away somewhere? Who will I ask?