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## Strangers after a Lifetime Together

Ravi Naicker

My Alzheimers must have come to you as a shock,  
a tsunami that swept through your life,  
erasing a life in compliance with order;  
my once elephantine memory fading into oblivion  
before your benevolent eyes.

When I became a global village of my own  
you unstintingly lent me a hand,  
shadowed my altered life.  
I had become a stranger to you  
but you still embraced me.

Sometimes I catch a glimpse of your smile.  
You wait upon me with the patience of a saint,  
the door of your heart open, without reserve.  
Those happy moments we shared together  
when our children played in the garden  
or – the clock had advanced -  
when we sat near the hearth during winter nights  
stealing glimpses of the fire consuming the log,  
whilst we read our favourite books  
exotic fish swimming the length of the tank,  
you and I aging with grace, our home emptying.

Therefore, cherish the gift of memory, savour it,  
as you hug a snowman before the sun rises.

Sometimes you look at me hoping for a response  
but I stare at you like a piece of old furniture.  
Your tears cascade down your cheeks.  
I weep too and you wipe away mine.  
We look into each others eyes  
and memories of a lifetime go by.  
Sometimes I smile and it's like manna to you.  
I raise your hopes only to see your hope defeated  
even as our tears catch the light from the candle.

I would cross the world to have back my memory,  
reciprocate your love.