



MY NAME IS YOUR NAME

She thinks of that article her son brought her to read. It said that if you can't remember something, think of things you associate with it. For instance, if you can't remember the name of an actress, think about what movies she was in and who her co-stars were. Our memories live in neighborhoods, the article concluded. "Oh, I don't give a hoot about some actress!" she'd said, tossing the magazine on her bed. She wonders if her son remembers the neighborhood where he grew up, all those years ago when her husband was still alive. When she closes her eyes, she can sometimes see it. There were shrubs in front of the porch, she's almost certain. Shrubs that grew so high that they blocked the house. A boy in the neighborhood climbed up one of the shrubs all the way up to the sky where he encountered a giant. She shakes her head. No, that's just a fairytale. That's not real.

Her name is Eleanor. Or Elizabeth. Think! she orders herself, but she still can't determine if she's Eleanor or her sister is. Her sister. She should call her sister. But, no, her sister died. A few years ago. No more than ten. Does it say Eleanor or Elizabeth on her gravestone? She needs to check the name engraved on it and then she will know what her own name is. She could ask her son what her first name is but he is so exasperated whenever she asks him a question. Or his eyes start to mist the way they did when he was a child and struggled with his reading. She'd made little signs and hung them all over their home, word labels for bed, table, chair, window, room, on and on. She'd sat with him for hours and hours, making up little stories about words so he could remember them. When he arrived home from school each day, she'd say, "Yellow, Charles" instead of "Hello, Charles." And he learned to respond, "Y-E-L-L-O-W, Mommy." She'd been relieved when math came easily to him.

Now she doesn't live in a neighborhood. She lives in a big house with