

## The Bakery by Lisa Delaney

He stops into the bakery before he visits. A muffin, or cupcake, sometimes a whoopee-pie. He goes a few times a week, and often after our dinner and his busy work day.

She still knows him and the family, but no idea the year, her age or his. He'll reminisce over the old stories and pictures, but she thinks those events just happened. Interesting how in the same moment she thinks the children are in elementary school, yet knows one is married and the other wedding is coming soon.

She'll ask him if he's recently seen her parents or sister. He gives her a truthful no, he hasn't seen them in a while, knowing there's no need to remind her they've been gone for many decades.

She thinks home is the apartment where she lived with her parents before marrying his Dad. She seldom remembers the home where he grew up or her stories of raising four boisterous boys – it's just not in her thoughts. Nor is his Dad. A wonderful husband, a wonderful father, a wonderful 55-year marriage, and no longer a part of her present life. She's losing her memories of him, although she will sometimes ask why Dad doesn't visit, and he chooses not to tell her we lost Dad 3 years ago and have her relive that grief. Those are the hard visits. The times he comes home sad and tired. Maybe she just forgot Dad's name, or maybe this is one of the times she thinks she's married to someone else, but doesn't know who, and becomes confused, and it's difficult for him to reassure her or redirect her to a happier topic. Don't worry, Mom, I will take care of it. Is your tea cold – do you want more of your muffin?

He hasn't taken her our lately other than doctor's appointments. It takes so much time to get her ready and then she has less energy to enjoy herself. But he tries to go to every event, and has organized a movie night. It's easier in the warm weather, and he usually makes the weekly summer outdoor concerts where they serve wine, and they sit back and enjoy the music, and a night outside with no thoughts and no need to remember, and the wine, and their cupcakes.

It's unlikely he'll have her come to our child's wedding. It's too far away, and too late in the day, and unfair to dress her up for display. Oh look, Nana's here. But is it fair knowing there is a wedding and not go, and will she remember not going, or remember the wedding. Or has she already forgotten. And is it fair to him to celebrate a great family day but not share it with everyone he loves. Dad is gone, and Mom is going, going. It's not fair.

And so tonight, after our dinner and his busy work day, he will stop into the bakery before he visits.