

FIRSTPOST.

Monday, July 24, 2017 | Switch to हिंदी (<http://hindi.firstpost.com/>)

[HOME \(/\)](#) [POLITICS \(/CATEGORY/POLITICS\)](#) [SPORTS \(/CATEGORY/SPORTS\)](#) [INDIA \(/CATEGORY/INDIA\)](#)
[WORLD \(/CATEGORY/WORLD\)](#) [BUSINESS \(/CATEGORY/BUSINESS\)](#)
[ENTERTAINMENT \(/CATEGORY/ENTERTAINMENT\)](#) [PHOTOS \(/CATEGORY/PHOTOS\)](#)
[VIDEOS \(/CATEGORY/VIDEOS\)](#) [SHOWS \(HTTP://WWW.FIRSTPOST.COM/SHOWS/\)](#)
[TECH2 \(HTTP://TECH.FIRSTPOST.COM\)](#) [FAKING NEWS \(HTTP://WWW.FAKINGNEWS.FIRSTPOST.COM\)](#)

You are here: [Latest News \(http://www.firstpost.com/\)](http://www.firstpost.com/) / [Living News \(http://www.firstpost.com/category/living\)](http://www.firstpost.com/category/living)

Do not go gentle into that good night: On Alzheimer's, women and empowerment

[Living \(/category/living\)](#)

[Himanjali Sankar \(/author/himanjali-sankar\)](#)

Jul, 09 2017 12:47:00 IST

Comment 1

Share 55

Tweet



([whatsapp://send?text=Do not go gentle into that good night: On Alzheimer's, women and empowerment - http://www.firstpost.com/living/do-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night-on-alzheimers-women-and-empowerment-3792707.html](https://whatsapp://send?text=Do%20not%20go%20gentle%20into%20that%20good%20night%3A%20On%20Alzheimer%27s%2C%20women%20and%20empowerment%20-%20http%3A%2F%2Fwww.firstpost.com%2Fliving%2Fdo-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night-on-alzheimers-women-and-empowerment-3792707.html))

Till the grip is tightened, till there is no wiggle room left, Alzheimer's graciously allows a moment of whimsical freedom that life doesn't always afford. Between the time the disease is confirmed and before it leaves you helpless, there is a small window through which you can climb into a place

where there are no rules. Fall down the rabbit hole into a wonderland where you can finally let go of social constraints, of the everyday pettiness that overtook your life, god knows when.

Life is short and this window is small, so unleash the fullness of your self just this one last time. Wear your clothes inside out, set the kitchen on fire. You don't have to protect your children from your husband and vice versa. Stop wearing jewellery that damages your earlobes. Stop haggling with shopkeepers because really you are on your way to your grave and the pleasure of saving even a lakh of rupees is going to be meaningless soon.

Whether you like it or not, it's time for a life without filters. If you used to spend many hours cooking and cleaning, you can let the family go hungry now and let those cobwebs dangle. Throw the paperwork in the dustbin and read a book backwards. Wash the vegetables with mustard oil and take a bath with orange squash. Might be a little sticky but stickiness is fine.



Alzheimer's is one of the most feared diseases, though one is not sure for whom — the caregivers or the patient. Photo for representation only, courtesy Zoli Plosz/freemages.com
(<http://www.firstpost.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/woman-prisma.jpg>)

If you were used to a privileged life, the sort of advantages you will now have might be different. I am not quite sure why but wealthier women work harder at justifying their lives. They tend to often explain their privileges and wonder why feminism exists. Because, aren't women luckier than men? In any case life is nothing if not wonderfully random. Luck plays a reasonable role in every sort of life really — it is what is stopping the roof from collapsing on my head as I write!

But luck is a funny thing that can run out just like everything else. Never mind where you are coming from. You are left with the knowledge that the decisions you made weren't yours to make in the first place and you didn't really need to justify anything at all. You can put it down to destiny if you believe in that sort of thing or pure whimsy and rubbish if you don't. You are alone but how does it

matter? Inside your head it's a good place. No more worrying about what others are thinking. The peace of forgetting even those you loved most. It's the ultimate revenge if you would like a bit of that. Nothing hurts as much as being forgotten — not anger, not envy, nothing else.

It's short-lived. The advantages of an illness that empowers. Of a condition that is beyond reproach because you no longer seem to have agency. Enjoy these moments of glory before the disease finally takes you down, to the climax that precedes tragedy in a Shakespearean drama.

Alzheimer's is one of the most feared diseases, though I am not sure for whom — the caregivers or for the patient. I wonder if the loss of memory, the forgetting, finally leads to a movement away from anger, fear and the emotions that we know on a quotidian basis. A state of nothingness rather than helplessness or fear.

Alzheimer's sends out more questions than answers. The patient recedes like Benjamin Button and leaves us with no coherent understanding of the suffering, the pain she might or might not have gone through. The smile of an Alzheimer's patient means the world because it is the only known connection to happiness that family members can make on the patient's behalf. It's not full of promise like a baby's first smile but it reveals the glimmer of past happiness and a present that is fading but perhaps not unkind.

Mourning for someone who isn't dead is what the family is forced to confront — the baser emotions of revenge and hate dignify and give more satisfaction than empathy and love which make no sense in front of a disease that ravages. Dylan Thomas got it right. Old age must burn and rave at close of day and rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Himanjali Sankar's novel about family, love and forgetting, Mrs C Remembers, was published this summer

Published Date: Jul 09, 2017 12:47 pm | Updated Date: Jul 09, 2017 12:47 pm

PROMOTED STORIES



Quick and easy to procure Digital Signature

Sineware



Cure your diabetes with this 1 natural trick!

GlyxGo



Are you geared up for the monsoon?

Bajaj Allianz



ULIPs: How to choose the best investment!

TomorrowMakers



Help 3-year-old undergo a liver transplant!

Milaap



Taking cloud to the next level

ET RETAIL



Best selfie smartphones of 2017

GADGETS NOW



Xiaomi set to launch Mi Max 2 on 25th May

TechRadar

Also See