

*Yes is an Apple*  
Sharon Van Sluijs

The nurse told me, yesterday my mother talked  
about my father as though he were here,  
maybe “upstairs” somewhere. She knew it.  
Though he is gone a year.

The nurse told me, this morning my mother lost  
track of an apple she saved from supper,  
hidden—who knows where? She, sunk in  
no memory, at times, of anything  
fresher than decades ago.

I'm here. Will she recall  
my name? It will  
come to that—her mind's  
implacable self-deletion.  
I try to imagine  
and know I will gasp  
when I fade to *Who?*  
*Nameless.*  
*Stranger.*

“*Hi, Mama,*” I say, “*Do you know me?*”  
She looks, fogged, then focused,  
and smiles wide.  
*Yes* is an apple, shiny and solid,  
sweet with our history,  
still knowing, for now,  
now.