

Life as Harold

Harold is unable to organize his memories in chronological order. He was not dropped as a baby or hit by a bus. He was born without the part of your brain that's supposed to act as a filing cabinet. All his memories exist at the same time. His brain picks and chooses the order at random. It's just "one of those things." People point and laugh because he'll sometimes forget he isn't a two-year-old baby that doesn't know how to walk. Other times, he forgets how to think in words. Harold is a 46-year-old man. For the time being. Harold often forgets where he is and what he's doing. Or when it is. You only know it's the present because the past already happened. Harold doesn't get that luxury. This is how Harold currently remembers his life, in sequential order:

1. 16-years-old. Danny Elfman wins a Grammy for writing "The Batman Theme." Dinner's cold. Mom's pissed. Not about Batman.
2. 44-years-old. You're on the phone with a woman. Don't know who. You think you recognize her voice. She sounds worried. That's why you recognize it. She says you haven't called in a while. Did you call her? She tells you she loves you. You tell her you love her too. You don't know who she is. But you know you love her.
3. 35-years-old. Just got a haircut. You show the barber the same picture of you every time because that's how you like it cut. You're 14 in the picture. You think mom took it. You just introduced yourself to the barber that you've been going to for the past two years. He went along with it. There was something you were supposed to do today...
4. 8-years-old. In your room. Talking to the walls again. You talk to the walls because the walls are nice to you. You know it's sad. The walls are your friend. You hear yelling from the other room. What's the problem?
5. 19-years-old. Dodger game. You ate three Dodger Dogs and threw up in the bathroom. You lost count. You're with Dad. Mom's not there. Dad's not wearing his wedding ring.
6. 23-years-old. You're with dad in the bathroom. You're sitting on the floor.



- He's wiping the blood off your scraped knees. Forget how to walk again? Must have embarrassed him. You feel sorry for Dad. You feel sorry you are the way you are.
7. 20-years-old. Everything's black. What's going on? You open your eyes. Everything isn't black anymore. You're at a wedding. Dad is up there with a woman. Not your mom. You close your eyes. Everything's black. What's going on? You feel the letter in your pocket.
 8. 42-years-old. You smell sausage. The nurse is making breakfast. You aren't allowed to be near knives. Dad is sitting on the other side of the table. He's getting old. You like to think the nurse is for him. You get an at-home nurse because you were born well-off. You've never had a job. Who would hire you? You can't get anything done. You can't make your own sausage for breakfast.
 9. 12-years-old. Mom's teaching you math. You don't get to go to school with the other kids. You don't have any friends. Or maybe you do. You don't remember. You don't know math either. But she tells it to you anyway. It's for her too.
 10. 21-years-old. Watching a movie with Dad. *Dazed and Confused*. He says it's your favorite movie. There's no real plot. You like that. It is your favorite movie.
 11. 32-years-old. You're standing on the street. You're lost. You don't know if you've been there before. You feel scared. You don't want to embarrass yourself. You want to run. You think about running. Dad walks out of the house. He says he left his jacket inside.
 12. 18-years-old. Mom's writing a letter. She's crying. Dad's standing by the door. She puts the letter in an envelope and doesn't seal it. She writes on the back of it "Read me – Mom." There's a phone number written on the bottom. She tells you not to lose it.
 13. 10-years-old. You're laying down on grass. You look up at the sky. You don't know when. Or where. Or why. The clouds move. That's what clouds do. You wonder how far they've traveled since you started watching them. You wonder how long you've been there. You dig your fingers into the earth. Dirt gets in your fingernails. You don't mind. You feel at peace.

