

# Stroke

*by* Jake Barnes

She lies on the floor and looks up at the ceiling. For a time she watches a dust mote squirm on the painted plaster. She knows where she is; she knows why she is there. She is on the floor because, even with guard rails, she keeps falling out of bed.

She knows, too, that her son is here for a visit. He came into her room this morning, sat for awhile, then left. He didn't say a word. Of course, she didn't either. She seldom talked anymore. Why should she? To what purpose?

She looks out the window. Blue sky, a few clouds. It must be summer. Yes. Her son would have been bundled up if it were winter.

She doesn't regret that they hadn't spoken. What did they have to say to each other, anyway? Her life was here, such as it was. His was two thousand miles away. And, she thought with crystal clarity, they had never liked each other anyway.

She sighed. She closed her eyes. She wondered if she would remember any of this when she woke up.

