

That Dark Spot

by Maggie Sokolik

"Right there." Doctor Hagedorn pointed. "That dark spot."

Lina moved in closer, but didn't see it. Her brain scan looked like a lotus slice.

The doctor continued, "Probably accounts for your symptoms."

A week ago, Lina had felt a pain crack over her right eyebrow. It was there every day, creeping from her ear to the middle of her forehead.

"I'd like to do some further tests..."

"No," said Lina.

"You can't ignore this."

"Maybe next week."

"Tomorrow." The doctor started writing. Lina noticed the part in Dr. Hagedorn's red hair was gray. This comforted her.

Lina sat quietly at dinner, not eating the potatoes she had mashed or the corn she had husked. She thought about the stroke that had crippled her mother, leaving her silent and drooling.

Aphasia. Lina's mother could no longer speak, read, or write. She could move her left hand, so she would feebly gesture to Lina--a sad game of charades.

Lina drove to Morrow Manor, where her mother was probably already in bed, dreaming of the mad scene from *Lucia di*

Lammermoor: Lina called it Sorrow Manor—just half in jest.

She drove away without going in, taking the freeway to the Ferry Terminal.

No one noticed her on the ferry. Not a soul on deck. She walked to the railing and looked over the edge. She couldn't see the water below. No matter, she thought. She knew it was there.

She climbed over the rail and jumped into the mist.

