

# Carol-Mary Fraser - A Change of Mind

Just suppose. Now let's imagine. What if?

What would it be like to have a memory

That functioned sometimes but at others failed the test,

Like some old creaky household gadget on the blink,

As trusty as a teacup made of lace?

Looking at a jacket laid across the bed -

A jacket I'd have worn for two years past or more -

It must belong to someone else, not me, I'd say,

That hairy Harris tweed – indeed, not mine.

Or venturing along the street, my purpose set,

And losing purpose and my whereabouts in shops

Which, though familiar, might as well be foreign parts

Where strangers mill. And I am all at sea.

What if I were stranded on one side of life's

Relentless river, loved ones on the other bank,

And I unable to reach out and recognise

The baffled, saddened features of my son?

If my lucid moments were like clumps of grass

Exposed by melting snow, green spots in fields of white,

Would I still be myself, or only partly so?

A kind of speckled self, but not a whole?

Just imagine if one day I might be told

That hope was round the corner for me in the form

Of radical techniques to tune me in again -

To rearrange the workings of my brain.

A make-over for failing brains – it sounds good.

A mind renewed, restored. Maybe some joy in life.

But would I understand what they had said to me?

Would I be fit to give them my consent?

Genetic modification - would it work?

And would my sentient self accept these revamped cells?

It's not my arm or leg or nose they're changing here,

It's me, myself, the person that I am.

Could it be turned from a Frankenstein fable

Into healthy hope for those whose minds are crumbling?

Or would well-intentioned research set in motion

Science going rotten: designer brains?

What if?

*Writer bio: I am a retired musician, now a (very) mature philosophy student. I am interested in every aspect of the human condition - and that of non-humans.*