

## Forgetfulness

The name of the author is the first to go, followed obediently by the title, the plot, the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never even heard of,

as if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor, decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain, to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the names of the nine Muses goodbye and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag, and even now as you memorize the order of the planets.

something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps, the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember, it is not poised on the tip of your tongue, not even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river, whose name begins with an L as far as you can recall, well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a bicycle.

No wonder you rise in the middle of the night to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war. No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

from Questions About Angels by *Billy Collins*  
For more of Billy's poems visit [www.bignap.com](http://www.bignap.com)

**When a scientist says...**

It has long been known that...

Of great theoretical and practical...

Typical results are shown...

It is suggested that...

It is generally believed that...

It is clear that much additional work will be required before a complete understanding...

Unfortunately, a quantitative theory to account for these results has not been formulated.

Correct within an order of magnitude...

Thanks are due to Joe Clotz for assistance with the experiments and to Boyton Fird for valuable discussion.

**What he meant is...**

I haven't bothered to look up the original reference, but...

Interesting to me...

The best results are shown...

I think...

A couple of guys think so, too.

I don't understand it.

I can't think of one, and neither has anyone else.

Wrong.

Clotz did the work and Fird interpreted the data.

GREAT PRESENTATION SKILLS

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS

AVERAGE EMPLOYEE

EXCEPTIONALLY WELL QUALIFIED

WORK IS FIRST PRIORITY

ACTIVE SOCIALLY

FAMILY IS ACTIVE SOCIALLY

INDEPENDENT WORKER

QUICK THINKING

CAREFUL THINKER

AGGRESSIVE

USES LOGIC ON DIFFICULT JOBS

EXPRESSES THEMSELVES WELL

METICULOUS ATTENTION TO DETAIL

HAS LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD JUDGEMENT

KEEN SENSE OF HUMOR

CAREER MINDED

Able to bullshit

Spends lots of time on phone

Not too bright

Made no major blunders yet

Too ugly to get a date

Drinks a lot

Spouse drinks, too

Nobody knows what he/she does

Offers plausible excuses

Won't make a decision

Obnoxious

Gets someone else to do it

Speaks English

A nit picker

Is tall or has a loud voice

Lucky

Knows a lot of dirty jokes

Back Stabber