

## Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a guest in memory, never fully at home there, never quiet as a condition on its own. Is there a bad nostalgia, is there a good one, or are there just bad or good ways of remembering? A good way of remembering, of course, is memory that is going somewhere, that links your presence to people you have known or played with or who instinctively understand you. Memories drawn from that substantiality promise to offer healing advantages, and to offer surprising launching pads for unexpected new memory makings. Good ways of remembering offer many benefits if handled skillfully. Nostalgia is not often easy to manage. Sometimes it is dangerously persistent.

Nostalgia lays a distinctive twist onto memory. It kicks in where sadness infects ordinary memorial processing, the construction of daily life as the past.

Say George had a girlfriend from Japan. Decades ago he visited her in Japan during Cherry Blossom time, early spring. They had a wonderful time walking through the Imperial Gardens, holding hands and kissing as the filmy blossoms drifted down around them. Subsequent events prevented them from pushing forward to marriage, and as the decades passed—George meanwhile having become a happily married oil executive, lovely wife four children—George almost forgot Ayako. However, because George was a sensitive man he found himself falling prey to a hard to handle nostalgia. Every March, in Cherry Blossom time, his company sent George to represent them at the international Aramco Conference. Each spring George was thus returned to a wonderland beauty of the spring, and for three days swamped by nostalgia for what he could not keep from seeming the happiest moments of his life.