

Sometimes I Make Teriyaki
By Cheryl L. Courtney

I was once on the cutting edge of a career. At fifty, the edge is hard to see or I've forgotten where I left it. I pin reminder notes to my blouse. *Ok, just snap this rubber band around your wrist, and remember to read them.* Alas, bits of soggy yellow paper litter the washing machine. What's next? A shock collar?

Everyone expects an accurate short-term memory and perfect near vision. But, simple sequential number codes elude me. What good is speed dial when I can't unlock the cell phone or read the tiny numbers? I've thought about tattooing my bank pin number onto my palm, in really large print.

Inevitably, I get lost in the switch between glasses trying to read recipes and spice labels on the top shelf. I cook blind, relying on smell or taste. *Was that brown sugar instead of a three pepper blend?* So, I stir in pineapples. These days, I aim at chili; sometimes I get teriyaki.

My new bifocals seem to have a trip wire, especially around stairs or the cat. If I fall down on the way to what ever I have forgotten, I think I can remember how to dial 911. But, forget parallel parking. I can't tilt my nose down *and* back up the car safely. My neck is killing me.

My marriage has collateral damage. If my engineer husband tries to talk about his workday, I stare. My mind fumbles. *Hmmm. I know that word. Wait! Here's the thesaurus; now where are those reading glasses? Never mind. He's gone away, mad.* I wanted to show him my new tattoo, but I forget why.

I solve newspapers puzzles in ink; I eat soy and fish, but the brain fog permeates everything. There's a tall stack of books by my night stand, only I can't recall who wrote what or any of the details. I'll get to read them all again, after this metamorphosis. At least I have that going for me.

If I sneeze, I leak and get confused. When did I turn into such a soggy mess? The doctor says this is the "full array of peri-menopausal symptoms." I'm betting I forget I knew that.

I long for a long nap, to sleep through the change. But, with these hormones, I'll probably wake up with a long white beard and more chest hair.

I cling to hope. One day I will remember how to play to an inside straight.
Oh! A note—chili tonight! I better add pineapple to the list.

Geeze, what's happening now? It's really hot in here. Maybe the shock collar is too tight...