

If she only took his frontal lobe, would she have his bouts of depression? His macabre humor? She had dark memories of her childhood. But she knew his were even darker. She pictured his brain as a necrotic cloud that would slowly eat at her flesh, starting from the head.

When Halima was a child, she remembered being left alone in the basement. It was hours before anyone noticed that she had not eaten, not gone to the bathroom. She stared at the wooden sign on the wall, making anagrams out of the letters. At times, it seemed like the door to the main floor had become locked. But she might not be recalling it correctly.

When she saw kids hugging their parents when they were being picked up from school, she thought it was strange.

She knew that her brain was soft and pinkish gray but in the scan, it looked malevolent yellow in places and at times red. She changed the subject when the doctor asked if she had made any decisions, but unluckily, her father was in the room.

“Tell her, Dr. Taylor, tell her she doesn’t have a lot of time left.”

She had asked her father to stay in the waiting area, but regretted it. He was extremely offended. He had raised his voice at her. “It’s my brain too!”

At 44, Halima had begun going to the doctor’s office with her father, for the first time since she was a child. But if she thought back to that time, had he actually ever come with her? Hadn’t it only been their mother who had taken them to appointments? She remembered taking the bus, because they only had one car. Her mother would try to get them all on with one fare. She told the driver that they were under five, when they weren’t. But they’d been small for their age, she and her brother Akmal.

But only her mother and father had gone to her mother’s appointments.