

After Forgetting

The title, *After Forgetting*, might refer to the mental confusion of feeling like you've just forgotten something, the "it's on the tip of my tongue" phenomenon. I go through a litany of techniques trying to grasp what I think I've forgotten – recite the alphabet and hope that the correct first letter of the forgotten word or idea triggers the memory; go over every previous thought and event in order hoping this will lead me to the forgotten memory; try not to remember and hope that it will pop into my head without my trying; rearrange my memories hoping that an unusual juxtaposition will spark my memory; or simply wrack my brain trying through sheer force of will to pull the memory from the depths of my brain. Sometimes, though, I wonder if I haven't forgotten it all, but the thing I'm trying to remember is so insignificant that it can't be the thing I've been trying to remember.

There may be different levels of forgetting. Sometimes you want to forget something so that you can move on in life. But it's too important to forget at the deepest level; it just needs to be removed from the top level of your brain. The title might also be referring to this.

After Forgetting is a Meet the Composer/*Commissioning Music USA* commission. It was written while in residence at the American Academy in Rome.

Keeril Makan
(2009)