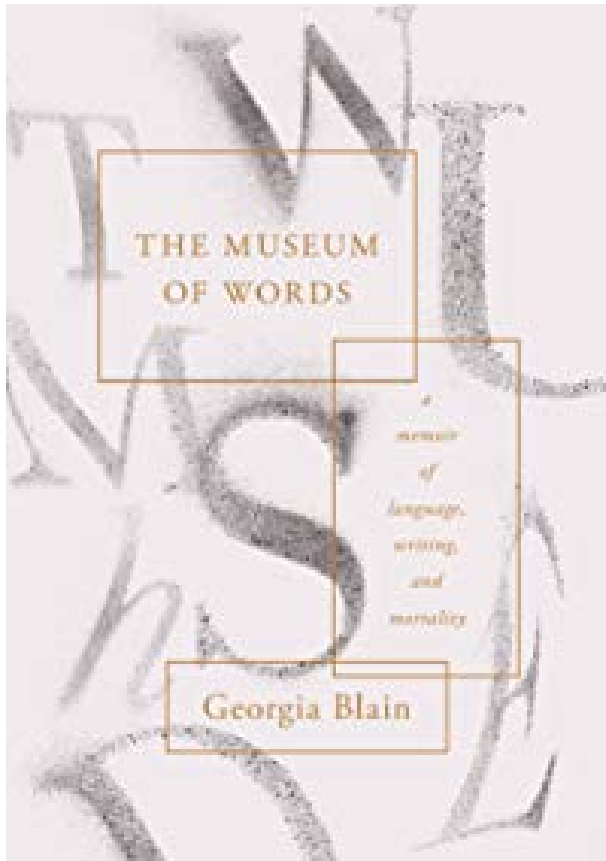


The Museum of Words: a memoir of language, writing, and mortality



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In late 2015, Georgia Blain was diagnosed with a tumour sitting right in the language centre of her brain. Prior to this, Georgia's only warning had been a niggling sense that her speech was slightly awry. She ignored it, and on a bright spring day, as she was mowing the lawn, she collapsed on a bed of blossoms, blood frothing at her mouth. Waking up to find herself in the back of an ambulance being rushed to hospital, she tries to answer questions, but is unable to speak.

After the shock of a bleak prognosis and a long, gruelling treatment schedule, she immediately turns to writing to rebuild her language and herself. At the same time, her mother, Anne Deveson, moves into a nursing home with Alzheimer's; weeks earlier, her best friend and mentor had been diagnosed with the same brain tumour. All three of them are writers, with language at the core of their being.

The Museum of Words is a meditation on writing, reading, first words and last words, picking up thread after thread as it builds on each story to become a much larger narrative. This idiosyncratic and deeply personal memoir is a writer's take on how language shapes us, and how often we take it for granted — until we are in danger of losing it.