



Writing for Survival

Career reporter, writer, and editor GREG O'BRIEN penned these very profiles last year even after he was diagnosed with the wretched disease that had claimed both his mother and maternal grandfather. Continuing to write has kept his mind active, but his loss of short-term memory makes work challenging. He has come up with a barrage of intellectual strategies to continue conversations even when he has forgotten to whom he is talking, and relies on his laptop, which is always with him, to look up simple words he can't recall on Google. "I have a responsibility as a journalist to tell this story," O'Brien, 63, says. So he has gone public with his Early Onset Alzheimer's struggle, starring in a short-form PBS documentary called "A Place Called Pluto" (see it at www.livingwithalz.org) and finishing up a 56,000-word manuscript that is being considered for publication titled *On Pluto: Inside the Mind of Alzheimer's*. The reference to Pluto best explains where he feels his mind goes at times. "I know one day I won't come back," he says. ☺