

Crippled memories

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Crippled Memories I awoke to the harsh sound of car horns beeping from below the five story, apartment building that I was staying in. An aroma of butter pancakes danced in the air, signaling that breakfast had begun.

I walked to the window to open the curtains allowing the sunlight to pour into the room. The rays of the sun shined through the window filling the bedroom with warmth and colors. The sound of laughter and talking filled my ears alongside the slight car horn in the background. I chose to follow the trail of laughter to the kitchen where I found a plate of golden pancakes stacked with whip cream. My grandmother and aunt sat facing each other talking with joy as they flipped through pages of a scrapbook.

My grandma's eyes shone bright when she looked up at me. " I made some pancakes for you and Sandra before we head out on our next adventure!" she exclaims. Ever since my cousin, Sandra, and I arrived, my grandma had unofficially announced herself as our tour guide. She had designed a full month schedule with activities to do each day. Everyday was a new exciting day for her, and she was beyond eager for us all to make the most of our day with her. She deliberately overbooked the day with site seeing and dinners.

I never took time to question the reasoning behind her schedule. I wish I did. " Please wake Sandra and let her know that we leave in fifteen minutes," she told me after I finished my breakfast. I walked through the tight slim hallway leading into my cousin's bedroom. My cousin laid on the bed with a cat held in her arms as she slept peacefully. " Wake up!" I spoke breaking the silence.

I shook her repetitively, which caused her to almost fall off the bed. The cat nonchalantly walked out of the room being used to this commotion in the

morning. She got up and chased me down the hallway as we threw pillows at one another. Our laughs echoed throughout the halls as we came to a stop by the kitchen. Sandra stopped running as her eyes lit up when she saw the pancakes on the wooden counter. “ You two have five minutes before we leave,” warned our grandmother as she looked up from the TV.

We rushed to get changed and Sandra had to eat her pancakes in the taxi. Our grandma guided us through the monumental outdoor mall that afternoon. My other cousin, Jude, had joined us and we were each given 15 dollars to buy anything we liked. It didn’t take long for the three of us to beg to go to the candy store. Thirty minutes later we left the store with our pockets filled with Haribo gummys and Pringles that wouldn’t fit in the other two bags of candy we bought. We had dinner in a cultural restaurant filled with music and traditional foods.

The vibrations of the drum echoed throughout the room causing a struggle to speak to one another over the music. It quickly became night as we struggled to find a taxi home. The summer night was cold and our grandma taught the three of us to whistle for a taxi to come by. Ten minutes later, the three of us managed to grab the attention of one taxi as we cheered in victory while entering the cab. Eventually, my cousins and I raced up the stairs to the apartment and began drumming impatiently on the main door. We ran into the warm apartment to shield ourselves from the cold breeze.

My aunts and uncle were already in the apartment with a movie prepared for us. My grandma made chocolate milk alongside popcorn for my cousins and me. The three of us were now sitting on the huge couch watching the movie

intently. We listened to the words in the movie and ignored the car beeps and screeches from outside. She laid a blanket on top of us that engulfed us with warmth.

She held us close to her and joined us on the couch for the rest of the movie. We fell asleep peacefully that night with the presence of one another in her home. Only a few years later did I come to cherish and reminisce those summer memories with my grandma and cousins. She was gone, too sick to keep up with life, her presence ceasing to exist. Five years later, I return to her home in hope to find a little piece of her remaining. I hold three fresh roses while I unlock the door causing the lock to make a loud thud as it opens.

The white marble floors are now stained gray from dust and my shoes leave a visible trail of prints along the hall. I shiver due to the apartment being colder than the night breeze. As I walk forward, my walking causes echoes throughout the desolate foyer until I stop at the kitchen. On the wood counter lay a single red rose that had withered in a vase. I walk on but come to an abrupt stop to see a pile of cat food being devoured by flies in the living room. In every bedroom, the bed was done perfectly and the pillows were aligned parallel to one another.

The house remained organized as she had left it. The apartment was silent that a pin would drop with a crashing sound. Car horns are pure audible now and the once irrelevant street noises quickly revolved to be the only entertainment occupying the place. I inhaled the misty air in the room that no longer contained sunlight and was rather consumed by the darkness of

the night. I tracked my footprints back to the kitchen tightening my fist around the three flowers that I still held.

I put aside the old rose and refilled the vase with fresh water from the faucet. I place the three roses in the vase and decided to return the crippled rose into the vase as well. I then shut the artificial light coming from the old bulbs that were flickering ever so. I turned the dusty doorknob and left without looking back. Because now there is nothing left. The light that illuminated this home had shut off completely over the past years and the apartment was left to cripple.

The laughter and warmth and the scent of vanilla had vanished leaving it bare and lifeless. It is no longer a home because its source of energy was no longer there and will never return. It now became a desolate apartment, no different from the next.