

The Thief in the Night

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Even though he is in motion, his life will forever remain on pause. He will remain as if a record, stuck on a break in a ridge. He will repeatedly play the very notes which captivated his soul, or in turn devastated his very being beyond repair. His memories have been stolen by a thief in the night, left with half but not the whole record, bits and pieces scattered about.

That thief was sneaky for it still crept through my grandfather's window every now and then just to steal a few more of his records. The thief had claimed many records; he had also claimed so many victims that it was ridiculous. This crook had not only mastered his craft but perfected it, and found pride by instilling fear into the minds of his victims. He was a prime example of thievery at its finest. He was sly and after he claimed a victim, he moved onto the next without delay. The record which told the stories of the long walks that my grandfather and I would take with me high on his shoulders, or the record that held the memory of the up-to-the-waist mud that my grandfather waded through in Normandy of World War II, were no longer a part of his collection. The records he felt proudest of were no longer within his grasp. For these reasons, I hated that thief.

With everything in me, I resented that thief. From the balls of my feet to the crown atop my head, I found hatred in the deepest depths of my soul for the crook. It was because of that thief that my grandfather laid his head on his pillow every night with guilt on his conscious for not remembering his grandchildren. It was because of that pathetic thief that my grandfather went to bed with a sense of emptiness about him that could never be refilled. It was because of that thief that my grandfather no longer reminisced with me about my childhood, let alone

recalled his own. Towards that thief, I found emotions I thought would come later in life. I felt hatred and I felt depression; but also, I found maturity. I found through this life experience that pain will knock on your door, but it's whether or not you embrace it to which it visits again unexpectedly. Without a doubt, pain will return, but by embracing it, you're ready the next time it knocks.

My grandfather and I were quite the pair when his mind was strong and my heart didn't have to deal with the pain of his mind's absence. I would wake him on a Saturday morning with bread in hand and shoes on foot, ready to feed the ducks by the river. We would walk hand in hand to the riverbank, and without delay, he would put me on his shoulders so I could lead him to the ducks. At that instant, I can remember finding myself on top of the world. We would distribute the bread evenly among the ducks, but I would always run out first. He would always say, "Pumpkins, keep in mind that these ducks find themselves more appreciative when they can enjoy their meal. They become "scatter brained" and tense when they have to fight for their bread. Just relax by reflecting on these moments and you won't find yourself in such a rush." Then he would give me half of his bread while also leaving me in amazement.

After every Sunday school, we would often find ourselves lying beneath the clouds, making up stories to go along with their shapes. We would put our arms out to our sides, and look up to the sky for amusement. I would spin alongside my grandfather, and to the cool green earth we would fall. After all of our spinning, we would land with a dizzy new train of thought. I would daydream of a ballerina with her arms stretched, just twirling and dancing as if to recite a story to an audience of one. Often he would tell a story, focusing on the life among the circus of acrobats, clowns, and animals that gathered underneath the big top to perform. Looking back at those moments, I believe he was reunited with his youth; I just wish he could have it back.

My grandfather is still to this day, my best friend. He is my hero, my protector, the very one who never let go of the seat of my bike. He's the one person I can relate to and I find comfort in knowing that. He may not remember me from time to time, and though it may hurt my feelings, I know that no matter what, I'm his "Pumpkin." I know that he will always love me. Even though he is in motion, his life will forever remain on pause. His memory was stolen by a thief, known as Alzheimer, left with half but not the whole record, bits and pieces scattered about.