



2020 Ben Strauss Youth Program
High School
Teen Essay Contest

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Grandma's Candys

We had just finished dinner, the plates stacked by the sink as I began to clean the phone rang. But as it was late it went ignored and my mother went about her business wiping the table, my father gathering more dishes and my brother already fast asleep in his crib. The phone rang once more and this time it was answered by my mother who was in her night time attire and dreary eyed, she holds the phone to her ear and the person on the other end speaks. I wondered what was happening and what events were transpiring on the other end of the line. My mother puts the phone back and turns to my father and they step out of the room. All I can hear is muffled murmurs and the sounds of pacing. As they talk my mind wanders, from what they could be discussing to what car I would like to own when I grow up and become a bajillionaire. The typical 11-year-old train of thought, then back onto something useless to keep me entertained whilst I wash the dishes. My parents return and look around as if they were looking for something perhaps and escape who knows. The chair rumbles as it is dragged across the floor and my father sits down. He lets out a moan of tiredness and sadness, the tone of the room is dark and silent and the only thing that can be heard is the sound of the clock, tick tock tick tock. Each thumping in my eardrum louder and more dulled then the last as my father began to tell me of what he had learned from my mother. As he drags on, I begin to focus back onto reality and hear him say "liam it's Grammy's going to be ok cancer is treatable these days its ok liam". I woke up and onto the bus I went. It seemed to be fast and slow at the same time but off to school I went. The class bells rang and the class commenced but as the teacher babbled on I couldn't shake the feeling I had. A feeling of despair, a feeling of sadness, a feeling of confusion. The despair of

losing my grandmother, the sadness of how it would be after she would be gone, the confusion of how an older lady could be in such good shape but yet get something so terrible. But yet time marches on.

On my way to School it was difficult because I felt alone, sitting there at my desk letting my mind fade off into a void of pointless tangents in a hope to free my mind from the thoughts of my grandmother's cancer. I walked into the cafeteria looking for my usual friend group that I would sit with and found them and sat down. I tried to eat but it was hard. Nothing seemed appetizing and so I just looked at it in silence which was very unlike a 11-year-old me. Going back to class felt like a useless point. Why continue to do something I felt no love for when my grandmother was in the hospital with cancer what was the point of this when I could be with her. Sitting on the bus ride home it was the same feeling of just pure boredom and unease a feeling that what would i do if my grandmother died and i was not there to say my final goodbyes. As i sat there on the bus i felt myself become more distant friends that i would talk to usually i ignored and sat there in silence trying to distract myself with the water droplets racing down the window. When i got home it was the same event "hello mom, hello dad' then i went up to my room to be away from everyone and everything. I left my room out of boredom and sadness as I moped around the house my parents worked and I sulked. I walked to our basement where I discovered a large pile of cd's with nothing better to do. I plugged them on into the player in my room and just listened. I found myself throwing all my problems into these songs and just sitting their listening to them and they were my real escape from the world where my grandmother's next breaths were uncertain and everything, I loved about her seemed to weigh in the balance.

The deep rhythmic soul music just taking it all off my chest and letting me relax is where I really found out about bill withers, Marvin Gaye, and Diana Ross.

I went to school in the days to come with a new outlook because of the music and finding a way to distract myself from the world that I was living in. From that point on anytime I saw my grandmother had extra time to love her but I could live with that. Then one day on a sweltering summer day we received a call. I was watching cartoons in the other room when I heard the phone and my mom answered it. She talked with whoever it was on the other end. I did not care much as to who it was but my mom turned to me and said liam pack your bags we're heading to gammy and papas. I began to worry if she had finally died or was the time close. All the music in the world could not have pulled me out of this feeling but on our way there I began to calm the car ride seemed to be cheery to be a sad event. When we got there we unpacked and headed out to dinner i was surprised most of the time my grandparents would cook something ,that was not the only strange thing my grandmother was home she was no longer at the hospital and she seemed better but was somewhat distant when we arrived at the restaurant i realized that this was a nice restaurant something no one was prepared for as we walked in feeling underdressed we sat down and after ordering food my grandmother looked to all of use and said in a gleeful voice "IT'S GONE" we knew exactly what she meant she had fought cancer and won. I wrapped my arms around her

and she smiled and I felt like a huge weight had been lifted off my chest and I was happy and I felt like whatever would happen after this would be ok after that she pulled out of her purse a piece of chocolate, a staple of my grandmother's sweetness and kindness.

To finish this off when I was going through a hard time I think the best thing you can do is find a way to distract yourself. Remember to always look at the positives to and to cherish the times you have with people and places before they're gone. To anyone fighting cancer or knows someone who is fighting cancer just remember that hope is the strongest tool you have and the harder you push the better off things will be so never give up cause when you give up that's when cancer really does win.