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Memorial

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Memorial

Author Bio

Ainsley is a first-year student at Gettysburg College and is an undeclared major with a minor in music. She is very interested in the English with Writing Concentration major and has enjoyed many writing opportunities on campus in addition to the Mercury including writing articles for the Gettysburgian and Her Campus. In her free time, she also loves to read, play piano, do art projects, be outdoors, and spend time with friends and family.

Memorial

AINSLEY C. GREEN

The Japanese maple rooted in the back right
Corner of our yard lasted a few seasons. It was small and fluffy, all
Whimsical wisps of feathery crimson leaves. As my mother and
I dug up the earth to make a home for this tree, I couldn't help
But glance at the emptiness of the backyard. The breeze carrying a whisper
From our windchimes, jumbled notes of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow."
The fire pit overflowing with floating ash and dead branches, waiting
To be burned. Waiting to be acknowledged. The dusty patches of dirt
Where our rickety swing set planted its feet into the ground, the
Swing set we tore down as a family with our bare hands as it began to
Crumble to the ground, screws loosened with no care as we swung to the
Stars. Fifteen, I saved a wood piece from the scraps of the structure, the
Castle I ran to after leaping off the school bus steps at six years old
When my father painstakingly scoured the instructions all day to
Build it. And now it was gone. My imagination, my childhood,
My everything, or so I thought. The tree didn't belong there, but we stood
Back to admire our efforts; it was a pretty little picture, adorned with blue
Twinkling lights and surrounded by a rich coating of mulch and some
Peculiar flowers – bleeding hearts my mother called them.
A bench was placed in front of the tree, and on summer nights I would
Flee to the base of the yard and sit there, talking. Only the fireflies glitter-
ing
In the trees could hear me, especially when I reached out and captured
Them as they flew by. I used to chase the creatures for
Hours and hours when there were hours to spare. When there was
Simplicity and the yard glowed a little bit brighter through my youthful
Vision. Nevertheless, the fireflies trapped in my hands tickled as they
Crawled around, and I had to let them go. I said goodbye as they flew away
Leaving me in the eerie softness of the night. I love you, and I walked back
To the house, hoping my mother wouldn't ask where I was
Even though I know she did the same thing sometimes.
The tree never got bigger or stronger, and yet withstood the weather at its

Peak intensity. I wondered how the fireflies would survive.
And still, each July, they emerged again and hovered by my face.
Something switched, and the tree went rigid; the trunk turned gray.
Draining the color from the beautiful leaves and leaving them singed.
One by one, the crisp remains drifted to the ground pitifully.
This time the tree was at a point of no return, and so we dug it out of the
Ground. In the springtime, a bush and a new array of flowers were planted
In its place. The bench stayed where it was, creating its own divots in
The dirt the longer it was there.