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The Person I Am Becoming

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The Person I Am Becoming

Abstract

Death, among other things, forces us to confront our own mortality, to question how we view ourselves in relation to others, to relive memories be they fond or not so much.

Over the past month, I lost both a grandfather -a quiet, intense, intelligent man who fostered in me a love for ice-cream and old movies- and a grandmother -the first family member to tell me it was OK to be queer. Their deaths left me scattered. My life became a dorm room floor during finals: covered in a mixture of clean and dirty clothing, food remains, and long-forgotten notes. For days, I stared at the mess, uncertain as to where to start... cleaning... picking up the pieces. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, death, gender

Disciplines

Gender and Sexuality | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Studies

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://cupola.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

THE PERSON I AM BECOMING

September 22, 2014

****Note: This article is meant to be read while listening to the attached YouTube link for ['The Untouchables End Title.'](#) This song is mentioned later in the article.*



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Over the past month, I lost both a grandfather -a quiet, intense, intelligent man who fostered in me a love for ice-cream and old movies- and a grandmother -the first family member to tell me it was OK to be queer. Their deaths left me scattered. My life became a dorm room floor during finals: covered in a mixture of clean and dirty clothing, food remains, and long-forgotten notes. For days, I stared at the mess, uncertain as to where to start...cleaning...picking up the pieces.

Sweeping my emotions under the rug proved to be a bad idea. Dusting off the shelves of childhood caused unwanted sneezes. Tears do not make for a suitable soap. While attempting to wall up the memory of my coming out to my grandmother behind some shoes, her voice reminded me, Ann, it doesn't matter if you're gay, I will always love you.'

Suddenly, creating organization out of my scatter-brained chaos became easier. Each article of clothing a memory relived. Sleeping in my grandpa's sweater the night he died to feel his arms around me one more time. Going to church on Sundays and eating those gross chewy orange peanuts with my grandparents. Listening to 'The Untouchables' theme song. The first time I watched Singing in the Rain. The day I knew I loved them.

Death can rob us of the chance to tell our loved ones how much they meant to us. It can also steal away the opportunity to let someone know who you are. My grandparents knew I liked women, but I never got the chance to tell them how they inspired me, served as guides along my path towards building my genderqueer identity.

This road has not been easy. At times, I look at someone I perceive as male and wonder whether I want to sleep with him or just become him. I look at my self-identified female friends and cannot divine if I feel the same as they. One or the other I thought, it has to be one or the other. Standing in the receiving lines, hearing anecdotes about my grandparents, stories of generosity, love, and charity, I realized I want both. I aspire to be the strong individual of faith who quietly says rosaries, buys ice-cream, and makes each grandchild feel like the favorite. I want to be a master pie baker who spends half their life in a Hallmark store searching for the right card to be accompanied by a long personalized letter. For these, gender is not a requirement.

Death took away my chance to tell my grandparents face to face about the person I have become. I do not want to be grandfather or grandmother; I want to be grandparent. Neither mother nor father, just parent. Not Ann or Andrew, but An. Genderless.

I cannot become my grandparents, I must be my own person, but I can follow their examples, pay attention to the lessons they left behind. Just as they did, I will run the race. As the story goes, I want to be the person buried with a fork because I know that something better is to come: a reunion with my grandparents in a place where gender does not exist, only love.

Abuelo. Abuelita. Te amo siempre. Opa. Großmutter. Ich liebe dich immer. I love you forever.

An Sasala '15

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