

# OMNIVISUM

literary magazine



who we are

## Grandmother's Photo

Written by Jena Lui

Ask me what I am thankful for and Grandmother, it goes back to you. Always. But I always think - could we not have gone back to the simpler times when I asked you on our walk back to (y)our home whether I should call you "Grandma" or "Grandmother" because English was my second language? You always asked me. Me, a young girl who only realized a year ago what the word "like" means.

I chose "Grandmother," only knowing my reason years later: greater respect.

Now, I would do anything to keep it all: the mother tongue, the sound of our steps on concrete, and the warmth of your hand holding mine. And always much more. Could we not go back to the moment where I told you about another one of my childhood limitations starting with the words, "No, you must not (do this or that)" and you asked, "But what do you want?"

During that moment, I felt the power beyond what my present self could ever regenerate. Feeling like a superhero but in the form of a first grader in a short sleeve shirt and a skort.

It has been about twelve years since we lowered you six feet below ground level. And I wonder if you

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could ever forgive us for abandoning you and your values  
the moment we stepped off the grass and drove away,  
tears blinding our sights. For the next few years, seeking  
your advice only to now keep my back towards your  
photo on the altar. I have not been able to sense your presence  
since the final days in the hospital where only the blurry faces  
of my relatives told me the story of your condition.  
All I have left is your photograph as a remainder  
of who you are in my memories. Let me purge my past persistently  
until I get the answers to what I want because the time machine  
broke years ago. Where did I go wrong  
because it feels like nothing is ever "right."  
"I am not "right."

