

“Memoir”
by Alwand M.

1.
When I was about 15 years old, I interviewed my father about my grandfather while he was doing paperwork. He was sitting by the table, paying and sorting bills from his workplace and our house while the tv was on. I was enthusiastic, but also anxious about what my grandfather was like since he died before I was born.

After he finished a new set of bills, I asked him anxiously, “I wanted to know what my grandfather was like before he died.” I thought he might reject the idea of answering that question, but he calmly, but quickly said, “He was a hard working man, and would have cared for you if he was still here with us.”

2.
My grandfather is the only husband my grandmother has had. They both met after they both were living in the same village and lived across from each other in Iran. My grandparents only had 3 children. My dad was the youngest one.

My father told me that my grandfather always wanted to have kids and to take care of them outside of the harsh lands of Iran and later Soviet Armenia. With the marriage, my grandparents were ready to have a family outside of harsh

countries- My grandfather and grandmother came out of Iran, then had to live in Soviet Armenia due to them being ethnically Armenian.

3.
My grandfather drank and smoked until his final years. He died after 4-5 years fighting liver cirrhosis. He died before I was born.

4.
As a kid, during a few days of the year, My family drove to Forest Lawn. The way my father drives is very bumpy and slow. It will take us 30 to 35 minutes to get there. On the way, we will get flowers and sometimes food before we go there. The flowers are either bought by street vendors or bought at Vons. They are colorful, ironic that they are to be put in a place of mostly gray, white, and black. The smell of flowers in the air brings me back.

5.
If I were to guess what my grandfather did while he was alive, I would say he would be helping my father in his business, he would most of his time gardening, growing fruits and vegetables, and sometimes building weaving tools for my grandmother.

6.
I was 7 when we went on our annual trip to Forest Lawn. While we were there, a funeral was taking place near us. The sound of grief and mourning was the only sound we could hear, while the smell of nothing filled the air. The smell was too clean, sterile, it smelled like nothing.

7.
Some days out of a month, I will do some yard work with my dad to clean up the garden in the backyard of our house. We will spend hours cutting, trimming, and cleaning to make sure the back yard looks perfect.

Whenever we do yard work, we start with the plants, then remove debris from the floor, and if we have time, we will wash the concrete floor clean.

8.
Whenever I do yard work. I always think about my grandfather, what he would do in this moment if he was alive. I think he would be cutting down the pomegranate tree with such tranquility and lightness.

9.
The sun, shining bright, hot, and gold, while the man I never got to meet, watches me from far above.

10.
My grandfather worked as an engineer for Marubeni, which is a Japanese company that specializes in Construction,

Auto, and Industrial-Machinery.

He worked in the construction section of the company. His work ethic was very clean and organized, of which I hope to follow.

11.

One item that my grandfather cared about was a pocket knife. It was an old pocket knife, made in 1890, but looked like it was recently made. The reason he cared about this pocket knife was because it belonged to his older brother. Sadly, he died young, leaving my grandfather only with this pocket knife. I have not seen the knife, since it is kept safe somewhere. However, I always think about it when I pick up a pocket knife.

16.

One of the talents my grandfather had was gardening. It was his favorite thing to do in his free time. He would spend hours upon hours cutting, pruning, trimming, and picking out of his backyard garden. As I have told you, my grandfather was a farmer in Iran, so it makes sense. If he saw that his tree was a few inches taller than it was supposed to be, he would rush out and trim it no matter the occasion. I have seen this talent through my father, who mostly helped my grandfather with the tasks.

17. When I think about my grandfather, I imagine him in a

plaid shirt tucked inside of ironed pants.

It was what he mostly wore and in all of his photos, you can see him wearing it.

18.

A common tradition we have is Armenian Easter. The celebration is more religious than a traditional Easter. Usually, we will make hard boiled eggs with colors around the shell. We then play with said eggs by hitting 2 eggs against each other, whatever egg does not crack wins. The main food for our Easter is white meat fish. We also have a collection of other Armenian foods too. Most of the Armenian community celebrates like us. The celebration is less religious to me, and more about time with family.

19.

My grandfather was a gardener. A gardener who saw the beauty of growth and change. A man who waited months waiting for the fruit of his labor. Each fruit is like a wave, changing and eventually growing.

20.

This story will never have an ending, and I hope it never does, but I know it will . Somewhere in this story is change, change that one day I hope I can meet. This writing is about memories that only come from pictures or words. It's about growth. It's about peace. And love. And solitude. And moving forward. With patience. With change.

I'm changing, one step at a time.

