

Ode

by Lizbeth Ramírez, Grade 10

The eighty-seven year old man enters the living room to sit next to his wife. The wife unable to walk is wheelchair ridden. My great-grandfather and great-grandmother's relationship had a greater bond than atoms forming an element.

He grabs some chocolate milk for my great-grandmother and drinks the small portion she always leaves him. He goes around the room asking if everyone had eaten before he sits down to take his plate.

“Nadie se queda con hambre cuando yo estoy aquí.” No one shall be hungry while I am here.

Well, I am hungry now, as his warmth is no longer here to comfort me. His warm embrace can no longer shelter me from the fights going on in the next room and I am starving now. His embrace, which I need more than ever, is nothing but a memory on my skin.

I think to myself, how can one just leave?

How can one go from enjoying each other's company to preparing for a funeral?

Did you see me by your side in the hospital room? I was there Papá. I was waiting for you to open your eyes. I was sitting by your side reciting godforsaken prayers. I even recited your favorite one, but you still didn't wake up.

Why couldn't you wake up?

For me?

Everyone said you were ready to leave, but it has been two months, four days, and twenty-two hours since you have left and my heart still shakes at the sound of your name.



Did you see me running, as they closed off your room when they officially announced you had passed?

My mother in shambles and everyone is running and *Oh My God, the world is ending!* I need to know that you saw me, that you were guiding me back to your room, as they told me I couldn't be there. Each step brings me closer to your spirit, and in each step I yearned to see you awake.

Why did you let them carry me away?

It's all so surreal and now it's Thursday. It's your funeral. I've never felt something as cold as a lifeless hand. When I touched your hand, not only was it cold from loss of blood, but the chills ran up my arm, tears sprung, and the reality set in.

One truly does not appreciate something enough until it is gone, until it is ripped away from you with no warning, until it feels like a limb has been removed from your body, and now I have to learn to live without it.