

POETRY | SPRING 2013

My Grandpa

By Meghan Wang

I see his body, but I do not see him.
Shuffling slowly to the door,
Cane in right hand.
Maid guiding him with her hands – one behind his back and one in front,
Like a protective wall,
Or sign language for “dependence.”

He used to throw me high in the air.
Now we can barely life his arm to embrace me,
I wonder how he feels.

He is still wearing pajamas—
A white cotton set with faded blue stripes.
The sleeves hang loosely around his arms,
The pants drag around his ankles.

It’s hard to see him like this,
No longer lively and talkative,
Smiling or laughing,
No longer excited to see his grandchildren from overseas.

His eyes look heavy,
Yearning to close.
His tired face marked with deep grooves—
Rivers forking together at the corners of his eyes,
Showing the many years of his life—
Painting the hardships, the obstacles, the successes.

There are brown spots on his face,
Each spot a reminder of time.
Each spot another word lost,
Another memory forgotten,
Another day erased.

As he shuffles towards me, my uncle quickly whispers something in his ear,
He tells me that I am his granddaughter.

He looks at me – confused, frustrated,
As though searching through a maze he once knew by heart
But suddenly unable to find his way.

I grab a picture of me on his mahogany coffee table,
Now covered with tissues, Chinese herbs and an air humidifier
I saw that the girl sitting on his lap is me
He looks at the picture, then at me
He looks astonished – mumbling something in Chinese that I can't understand

Pointing from the picture to me, he smiles.
I think he gets it
I tell him my name
He smiles again, and motions for us to sit down.

Meghan Wang is a freshman at USC, majoring in cultural anthropology. Living in California and being exposed to a vast array of people and cultures, she has always had a passion for understanding the great diversity that exists in our world. Writing allows her to make sense of and further investigate her experiences and surroundings. She wrote “My Grandpa” after a summer trip to Taipei as an outlet for her conflicted feelings about her grandfather’s rapid physical and mental deterioration and as a contemplation on “the inescapable future of life.”
