

The Loss of Forever

I remember him sipping his coffee next to me at breakfast while reading the newspaper. A solid presence, like he would sit beside me forever. Like the laughter floating around our family table *was* forever and there was no such thing as an end.

I remember running into his arms when he picked me up from aftercare and feeling so proud to call that man in the suit “Dad.” I grabbed his hand while he lifted my backpack, and we walked to the car, arms swinging in the space between us.

I remember waking in the encroaching darkness, then padding down the hall to where he slept. Years of nightmares, and he never stopped walking me back to bed. Never left before I fell back asleep again, even when I feared I couldn’t. He told me that somehow I always would — words which I whisper to myself even now when sleepless nights stretch long. Sometimes I awoke in the morning to find him snoring beside me, too tired to make it back to the bedroom where he and Mom slept.

I remember mint toothpaste on his breath when he wrapped me in his arms for a morning hug. And then the instant feeling of safety, warmth, and love I found there. The type of love which knows no bounds, which neither time nor place can ever alter. Not even the loss of forever that ushers in the end of childhood.

I remember wondering why forever ended so quickly, why the chair beside mine sat empty. Why the house fell quiet and the laughter ceased.

I remember raging against the injustice of it all, the sheer *wrong* of someone so good being ripped from life so early. The person who understood me best in the world was gone.

I remember so much and yet not enough. So little left to preserve what will always mean everything to me. After all, my decade of memories of him must last me a lifetime.

Must last forever.