

Issue IV

Memory



Not Quite Sure
literary magazine



best read in landscape



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Note from the Editor

The fourth issue of this magazine is one that challenged me creatively. Not because it was necessarily hard to do, but because I felt that it was time to evolve the magazine. This issue has more content, in terms of variation, than previous issues. You will notice this as you read and see the new types of piece in here.

As usual, I'd like to take some time to thank everybody who submitted and supported us in the creation of this issue. There is a lot that goes into making a magazine and most of it is in the work lent to us by creatives. Thank you, truly. I am glad to have given all of the selected pieces and their creators a place in the published world. I hope that you all feel the achievement that you deserve to.

Finally, I would just like to say that this issue is a step in a new direction. A brave new world waiting for us at the final page. This magazine is small, but we have high hopes for it. This is the start of potentially great things, and we're very grateful that you are here to see it.

- Holly E. O'Neill
Editor-in-Chief

This issue was brought to
you by . . .

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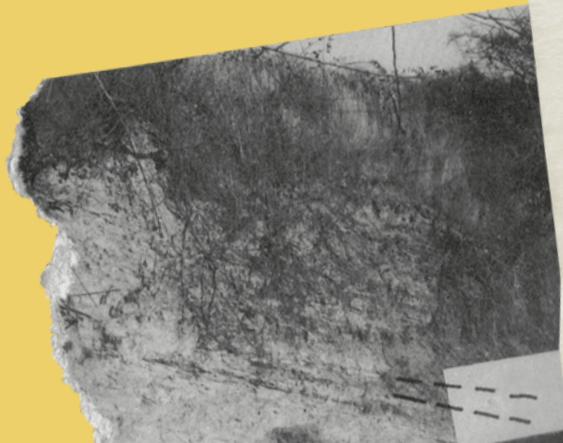
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Poetry



Faded Fables

My grandma told stories I cannot recall.

There once was a girl who lived out on the shores
her evil stepmother made her do all the chores.

She mumbled a spell,
fell in a well.
helped a magic cat,
got a magic hat.

Or did she run free,
then climbed a tree
that grew through the night
and got out of sight?

I try to squeeze the words out of the stories
but I cannot grasp them.

They are intangible, drained, smoky

my memory has deformed them
leaving mere feelings of stories:

the warmth of a rocking chair and a known ending;

the ancient possibility of great adventures ahead;

the comfort of a polished fairness: good things happened to the
“A story must have a moral” my grandma would say “for

And yet her stories also had magic, ‘cause she once was a child,



good girl.
children to learn good from evil".

and she needed to dream.

Faded Fables

My grandma told stories I cannot recall
I don't ask her to tell them again: she doesn't remember

It haunts me the knowledge her words vanished as soon as they



anymore.

were spoken.



You Are Here

You are here.

You are here.

They say you are not anymore,
But my heart knows you are here—
Not physically, but in memories.

I keep you with me everywhere I go.

I miss you in places where laughter exists,
Where I see siblings enjoying together.

I miss you at the dining table,
In the places where I once entered with you.

I miss teasing you, laughing with you.

I miss our time together.

I miss our school days—

The sunny days when we carried those heavy bags
With such carefree hearts.

I miss you calling me “AAPI.”

They say I've forgotten you,
But they don't see my heart
That still craves your presence—
To see you one more time in front of me,
To enjoy, one last time,
To laugh carefree, one last time.

The void I carry in my heart

Is something only I know.

The grief hits me on a random Wednesday,
Reminding me of your passing day and time,
Making me regret that I didn't do enough for you—
That maybe I could've made your last days happier,

But I carry a hope in my heart—
To meet you again, really soon,
Somewhere with no separation,
No pain, no regret, and no death.
Because I want to spend my forever life with you.



In loving memory of my late baby brother

Damp Polaroids

I stumbled across a photo album today
Discarded or lost, I don't know
Open on the pavement, the Polaroids damp
Water damaged weddings and soggy birthday celebrations
Some images irretrievable
Cheshire cat grins floating through bubbles of distortion
The photographs given brown frames
Creeping towards the centre
A slow creep
For they'd been there a while
I flick through the landscapes and the backyard fun
The birthday cakes and the setting suns
The bun fights, the one of granny
The coastal sights and a pint of shandy with cheese'n'onion

It reminds me of a time when I came upon a backstreet book
It had cats lounging on the shelves and a bell tinkled when you
There were spiders in the poetry section, books sprouting in all
My eyes were drawn to a box of postcards in the bay window
I flicked slow
Picasso paintings and Pink Floyd album covers, 'Whistler's
Images of Che Guevara and Cleopatra, Sherlock Holmes and
Billie Holiday and hidden away, between these images were
Memories
Spitfires and Hurricanes with an old man stood between the
Medals pinned to his tweed jacket
A war hero, no doubt
And when they cleared out his house there was nobody to claim
And they ended up here.



crisps.

shop
entered
directions

Mother'
Marilyn Monroe
photographs

planes

them

Damp Polaroids

Gary Bunting

I'm not a reminiscer
A wisher of going back to the past
But I do like the old photographs
The childhood holidays, my dad's moustache
Mum's huge glasses, my sister's goofiness
The memories, celebrations and special occasions.

Of course, time moves on, as it should
People pass, sometimes too soon
And all you have are the photographs
The sentimental value of otherwise worthless things.



The immensity of time
Winds itself around the throat
I swallow remnants of millions
Strung up for easy consumption

Pondering the loneliness of
The unmarked vestiges
Scattered through eonic dirt
Abandoned on foreign soil

Does untarnished gold see clear
Tomorrow shall never be birthed?
Hallowed bronze rusts slow against
What remains of ancient blood

Trekking through the valley
Clings to me a separate sorrow
The shade of the years unseen,
Unremembered, unforgotten

Famished cycles swallow whole
Epochs birthed on fertile ground
What was grown darkens to pitch
Burning in a blazing fury

A pallid Englishman digs
His fingers through the cinders
Unearthed and dissecting
A veritable treasury

Time was a slogging beast
I waded through with tied feet,
muttering the little German I'd acquired
in hopes of a better tomorrow.

I was unprepared and unmoored;
I'd only packed for nothing.
To speak to that child now,
I'd saw off a limb.

You are just as afraid,
just as cruel, but the world
does not always blur at the edges.
You feed ancient beasts with glee
and weep for ghosts,
and go on, and on, and on.

Prose



Shining Stars

She can count all the stars tonight. That is rare. Clear skies are rare. The motivation to count stars, even more so.

She remembers being 6 and wide-eyed, asking her mother where her pup Dexter went after she came from school, and he wasn't there at the doorstep- drooling, eyes bright, tail thumping like a metronome. And her mother had gathered her in her arms, walked out to the front porch, and pointed at the brightest star in the sky. "That's Dexter's new home, baby," she had murmured, voice soft and laced with a pain only age could bring. "All good pups and good people get to live on bright stars when they are extra nice and helpful."

"Will you go there too, mama? Will I go there too?" she had asked, eyes wide as saucers, blissfully unaware of the way her mother's hold tightened imperceptibly, how she tucked her under her chin a little bit more.

"We all go, sweetie. But right now, we have to be good girls and go to sleep so you can reach school on time tomorrow, okay?" Her mother had smiled.

And that was that.

Decades later, she now knows where Dexter (and her mom. And her dad) went. To somewhere that may or may not be on stars. But on nights like these, she likes to trace constellations like her papa taught her. She likes to gaze upwards and search for the brightest stars like she did with her mama. She likes to believe that they had saved one star for her too, and that someday, she would get to see them again - for eternity this time.

Eternity. The word feels funny when she looks out the terrace and there are rows and rows of apartment complexes where trees once stood, where land came after water did, where everything changed, is changing and will continue to change. Where the shadows through the windows change every few months. Last year, she remembers that the third apartment on the fifth floor in the opposite building had new parents feeding and napping their twins, now it's a family with a teenage boy and girl who often wrestle for the TV remote.

That sight always makes her smile. Perhaps, it's because she sees herself and her brother in those two. Always bickering, always joking, always supporting one another through thick and thin. She remembers seeing him as a new-born - tomato-red and wrinkly and squeaky. She had giggled. She remembers him as a chubby toddler, crawling backwards and bumping into furniture. She remembers helping him with homework, sacrificing her beloved sleep to save him from the teachers' wrath. She remembers pestering him to drive her out for her friends' birthday parties, she remembers cheering until her throat felt raw on his graduation day, she remembers fixing his collar on his wedding, she remembers the day she saw her nephew - his son, and thinking that no matter how old they grow, he's that tiny human blanched tomato to her first, everything else next.

Dew drops line the leaves of her beloved plants. The air is cold, and she shivers once, before feeling a warm, calloused hand on her shoulder. She knows who it is even before she turns to meet those impossibly warm, brown orbs. The

Shining Stars

person who has memorized her inside and out, just like she remembers him - mind, body and soul. The person who has twirled her under streetlights, the person who listened to her recount the same childhood incidents again and again and again, the person who assists her in creating memories for the little chaos hurricanes bundled and fast asleep inside. Her husband.

The word still feels so foreign, so unfamiliar. She remembers being ten and deciding that marriage was what grownups did. She remembers being thirteen and wishing for her fairytale, she remembers being sixteen and reading John Green and deciding that the 'oblivion is inevitable'. She remembers being twenty-two and dodging the topic of marriage because she was busy leaving a mark on the world with her works, her art, her entire being.

And suddenly she is thirty-five, and 'grown up', and happily married, and suddenly she wants to be the one remembering instead of the one being remembered. The moon climbs higher, and dogs howl in the distance, and she can't help but lean into him as he hums the melody that they used for their first dance - some Elvis song that she can't quite remember the lyrics of, but hums along nonetheless, giggling when his stubble tickles her shoulder. Just like what her mama and papa did in the kitchen when she was four, pulling her in and dancing to made-up melodies while preparing dinner on the side. Her tabby, Lucifer, lazily peers open one eye from his perch inside, sees the scene unfolding in front of him, and promptly goes back to sleep. Smart cat.

“What are you thinking of?” his voice rumbles through her back, and she turns, eyes glistening.

“Just remembering.”

“What? That time Lucifer clung to you like a magnet? Or the time my boss praised your cooking more than I did? Or...” He grins, wiggling his eyebrows. “Our daughter’s recent proclamation to the neighborhood about daddy’s ‘stinky-toed socks?’”

Her eyes widen as she swats at his shoulder. “Please tell me she didn’t say that,” she exclaims, but she already knows the answer.

“Oh yes, she did” He nods serenely, then adds, “While only wearing her diaper and refusing to put on pants.”

“Oh god, are we spoiling her too much?” she gasps, but he only grins.

“Nahh, I remember your dad telling me a similar story about someone I know. Guess it runs in the family.”

And now it’s her turn to blush scarlet. “Still...” she starts, and is cut off by a tiny sniffle.

“Dada, no sleep. Up,” her two-year-old son - currently standing in the doorway, hair sticking out in all directions, dried drool on his sleeve - all but demands, and she melts when the dada in question picks him up immediately. He is whispers tales of stars and planets and birds while she

Shining Stars

watches the little dictator's eyelashes flutter, and within minutes, he's out cold.

“Come on,” he mouths, before carrying the drooling cherub to his bedroom. She nods, because apparently, emotions hijack speaking ability, and follows, sliding the glass door behind her.

Most of the apartments' lights are switched off by now. A lone bat flies by, and suddenly she's twenty, standing outside her hostel gate, deciding that to remember meant to feel, and the memories where the sole remnants of what she no longer held. She remembers being twenty-five, drowning herself in work just to forget. She remembers herself at thirty-two, coming to her home without her mother in it, and realizing that all she lived as long as they could sit together and remember every little thing she did. She remembers being thirty-four, and her and her brother smiling through tears as they relived their childhood without any parent to cheer them on. She remembers the fragments of failure; she remembers the glimmer of hope. She remembers being praised by teachers and she remembers being scolded by professors. She remembers making new friends and losing old ones. She remembers moving houses, schools, cities. She remembers everything, and she remembers nothing.

The sky outside is turning the earliest shade of pink, and she realizes with a jolt that she had promised to take the kids to the playground in the morning. She draws the curtains, and pads over to their room, where her husband is already out cold, sprawled like a starfish. She snorts, remembering a childhood picture of him in this exact pose. Some things

never change.

She tugs her scarf closer and climbs in behind him, clinging like an octopus with attachment issues. He sleepily huffs before accommodating her, like he's memorized her even when asleep.

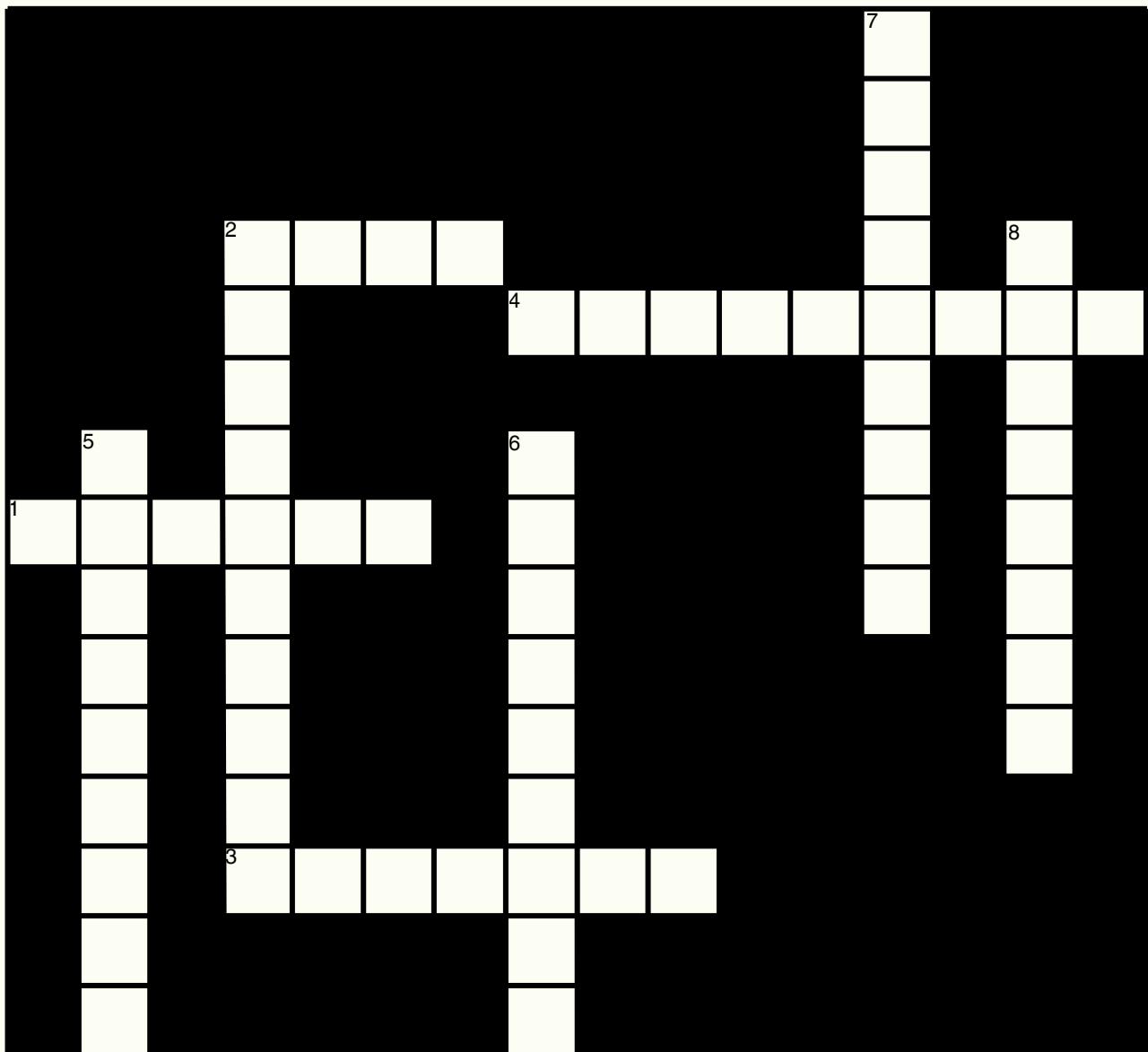
We remember, and to remember is to feel pain. But it is also to feel joy, to relive, to see where we came from, and where we are headed to. We change enough to make memories, but also stay the same enough to recall them over and over and over again. We make memories as much as memories make us.

The realization washes over her as sleep takes her. The dew is dripping off the plants, Lucifer sleepily flicks his tail, the children snore softly, as does her husband.

And somewhere, in the distance, a star twinkles a little brighter - for what she sees is nothing but the memory of where it once was.



C R O S S W O R D



A C R O S S

- 1 . S O M E T H I N G Y O U R E M E M B E R (6)
- 2 . B E F O R E T H E P R E S E N T , T H E — (4)
- 3 . M A D E I T I N T O T H E — B O O K S (7)
- 4 . T H E T I M E O F Y P U R Y O U T H (9)

D O W N

- 5 . T O T H I N K F O N D L Y O F T H E P A S T (9)
- 6 . S C R A P S O F Y O U R M E M O R I E S (9)
- 7 . Y O U M A K E A M E M O R Y (9)
- 8 . O F T E N H A D B Y W A R V E T E R A N S (9)

Memories of Gaza

Videos titled 'Memories of Gaza', or something similar, have begun to populate social media. In a few seconds, a collection of clips show life in Gaza before so many homes and families were destroyed. These clips create a brief pocket of time for people around the world to visit. A time that cannot currently be recreated as a result of the horrific violence being enacted in Palestine at the hands of the Israeli government, and all those complicit in the genocide. Seeing what they've lost is a reminder of how unfair their situation is. But it doesn't mean that we can't find the beauty in Palestine as it was, or that we cannot have hope for the return of that beautiful life for all those still here to experience it.

I've seen countless of these videos. Showcases of life in Palestine before things took a drastic turn for the worst. It is the beauty of the country. The culture. The simplicity of people being happy in their mundane lives. An ode to the individual's life which they share with the world because it meant something to them. To see the sunlight on the leaves of a tree as they dance in the wind, or the sea lapping against the rocks, and to see people sharing their time in prayer, or food made with love so well that you can almost smell it through the screen - this is what we see in these videos. For every video showing the recent-past in Palestine, a moment to appreciate what we have is given to us. A chance to love the small pieces of our lives that create our homes and give us comfort. The light coming in from a window can seem insignificant, but to have nothing but the

Staff Piece

remains of that window - broken glass and broken stone - would be devastating to us. Memories are wonderful to have, and the possibility of bringing them back is powerful, but to appreciate them while they're being made is the biggest gift we are given.

The reason why this phenomena is so intriguing is because of it being used as a response to devastation. People all around the world film vlogs for the internet, showing off their aesthetic apartments in desirable cities, the food they bought at hotspot number one, Pilates classes and study sessions. The people of Palestine are using them to reflect. To look back at what they had and to highlight without even having to say it that their homes and livelihoods have been completely ruined by genocide. These people continue everyday to suffer with empathy and dignity. To hold onto the hope that things will improve despite the overwhelmingly unsupportive response from the world's governments. It's to these people that we owe our support in any way we can give it. May this be all the encouragement you need to search up these videos for yourself and make sure that these voices do not go unheard.

We would also like to highlight Ayah (@warmfigure) on TikTok, whose video inspired this piece.

WORD SEARCH



R E M E M B E R

P H O T O B O O T H

N O S T A L G I A

P R E V I O U S

M E M O R I E S

R A M

H I P P O C A M P U S

A M N E S I A

H I S T O R Y

P E R S O N A L

Remnants of the Past

The house was unusually silent and dark when I stepped in, as if it was aware that the man who'd filled it for sixty long years was now gone.

My grandfather had been a romantic, often collecting weird trinkets, books and all sorts of music that helped remind him of his past -which had started slipping away in the past couple years. But the one thing he never forgot was her. My grandmother.

To younger me, she'd been little more than a ghost, gone the day my mother was born. So it had always been a bit difficult to understand him or my mother when anniversaries arrived.

He held a love for her I couldn't fathom, and my mother mourned a woman I had never known. But as years had passed I'd begun to understand, and now, I completely did. Because even though the man I'd had such a great time with in my childhood and teenage years was gone, part of his essence prevailed in every room I walked into.

I drew the curtains open and let some fresh air in.

It was the first time in three months I'd dared to come here and everywhere I looked reminded me of something. His jacket — which I used to steal as a kid — the blankets he curled me in when I got sick, even the small section in his living room he'd cleared for us to dance remained intact.

Sighing, I sat down on the old couch, the cushions still as hard as ever, but I didn't last for long. My thoughts outweighed

any peace I may have found between the memories.

The record player lay in a corner of the room, collecting dust. We'd moved it about a year ago to make way for the wheelchair my grandfather had been confined to when he'd started losing mobility, and we hadn't yet put it back into its place.

I crossed the room and knelt before it, brushing the dust away with a small cloth and lots of care, and reaching for the stack of records resting beneath it next.

Until one of them caught my eye.

It was our favorite one from when I was a child, one we'd danced to for hours upon hours. I stroked the cover of it — an electric feeling tingling in my fingertips, as if the cardboard itself remembered something.

My breath caught.

I couldn't pull it away to continue with the task I'd imposed on myself. Instead, I found my fingers caressing through the record player and sliding the record free — the little scratches from playing it over and over for almost thirty years tickled my hands.

I placed it on the turntable.

The needle settled in almost instantly. A hush fell over the house, the melodic sound playing and warming the room.

Remnants of the Past

After the first few notes played, I felt the world tilting, and I had to sit on the couch once again to avoid falling. As the walls blurred — wrapping and closing in — and the sofa under me started softening I forced myself to close my eyes. My head was spinning and my body felt like it was floating, almost feverish in a way.

I stayed that way until the world decided to stop once again.

The music kept playing in the background, but the beats sounded different, not like a studio version anymore. It had something more...real to it.

A strange echo.

When I opened my eyes, I was no longer sitting in my grandfather's living room.

I stood in what looked like an old bar.

Low-hanging amber sconces from the ceiling emitted a warm light, dimmed by their frosted glass, which diffused the light so that everything seemed softer, more intimate — the kind of place you'd find tucked into a side street in the fifties maybe. Around me, a dozen young people in cocktail dresses and tailored suits moved their bodies to the same melody I'd played back in my grandfather's house. Their shoes clicked against the checkerboard floor, with its black and white tiles contrasted against the polished wood at the edges. A slender bar lined one wall — wooden top, stone base shone faintly under the lights. Behind it, mirrored panels caught reflections of dancing couples.

Sofia B. Polo

A soft smoke in the air — coming from the cigarettes — clouded my vision a little, but that thankfully didn't seem to bother my breathing. Which, mixed with the perfumes and scent of spilt drinks. Everything felt hazy, sort of like a dream, and I felt suspended in the moment, enjoying a sight that was as magical as it was impossible to me.

I'd never been to a place like this, although I'd heard about it.

My eyes then laid on a young man that felt quite familiar, stopping me cold. His eyes were the same shape and color as my mother's and his hairstyle was quite similar to the one my grandfather had worn ever since I remembered.

He was dancing with a gorgeous woman.

Her hair was dark and wavy, spilling as it fell on her bare shoulders, directing my gaze to her emerald green dress. Her lipstick matched her nails — long, red and elegant. The woman twirled one last time, holding onto this man's hand, before retiring to the side of the room, where they sat at a table with some other people.

“I'll grab some drinks. What do you want, sweetheart?” the man asked, his voice was warm and achingly familiar.

“A sloe gin fizz, please,” answered the woman, laughing lightly.

The man held her hand for a second and kissed the back of it before parting away from the group. He walked straight in

Remnants of the Past

my direction but reached me before I had the chance to move away. Frozen, I mentally prepared myself to apologize, but instead of hitting me, he just walked right through my shoulder.

I stood there, my jaw on the floor, trying to comprehend what was going on.

I looked at my hands, at my body, just realizing how transparent everything was, seeing the floor through my own feet. My breathing quickened and shook and I started looking around, trying to get someone to notice, to help me. However, nobody paid attention to me.

Panic started setting in as I walked to the couple next to me and tried touching the girl. But my hand passed through her, again. Looking to the ground, I started shaking — the feeling of tears pooling burnt my eyes, but nothing fell from them.

I could barely breathe anymore.

I swallowed and ran to the bathrooms, where I curled myself on the floor and closed my eyes shut with all my might. What was happening to me?

It wasn't until a couple of minutes later, that the door to the bathroom opened.

I looked up and froze again. There she was, the woman that was dancing with the man that looked eerily similar to my grandfather, and talked like my grandfather, and moved like my grandfather.

But that was impossible. This was impossible.

The woman looked around and checked every single bathroom stall, humming the same song from outside.

“Are you lost?”

I looked up, unsure as to who she could be talking to, when I realized she’d knelt in front of me. She tilted her head and smiled softly. Her eyes, bright and curious, met mine.

“Strange clothes you’ve got on.”

My eyes opened wide. It wasn’t possible she was speaking to me.

“You... you can see me?”

“Yes.” She pressed a finger to her lips. “But don’t tell anybody.”

“I don’t think I can.” I said in a voice so low I was convinced there was no way the woman had heard me.

“What’s your name?” She scooted closer. “Mine’s Dorothea.”

I looked at her, studying her face carefully. Her classical features made me think she could’ve well been a model or a famous actress from the past.

“I’m Florence.”

Remnants of the Past

“Oh, that’s such a gorgeous name!” She said, ecstatic as she launched herself and held my hands. “That is how I’d like to name my daughter when I have one. My other option is Charlotte.”

I opened my eyes wider than ever. Charlotte was my mother’s name.

No, It couldn’t be, it was impossible. I must’ve hit my head when I got dizzy earlier and was dreaming all of this. Soon I was going to open my eyes and I’d be in my grandfather’s couch again, or at a hospital bed so I could recover from the obvious concussion I had.

“My mother always swore she saw spirits, so who knows. Maybe there’s a history of mediums in my family and that is why I can see you,” Dorothea continued. She seemed a bit lost in her own train of thought.

“But... I’m not a ghost, I’m not dead.”

“Then. What are you?” She furrowed her eyebrows and looked at me up and down. “Because with those clothes, it doesn’t make any sense that you’re from here.”

“I-I have no idea what I am.” Dorothea stroked my face.

“Follow me to my house, we can have a chat there. Hopefully I can find a way to help you.”

And that’s how we did it. She said goodbye to the mysterious man, whom by now I was sure was my grandfather, by

kissing him. It was sweet to see how much they seemed to was sure was my grandfather, by kissing him. It was sweet to see how much they seemed to love each other. If the woman really was my grandmother, it was easy to see why he'd missed her so much after her death, he was completely head over heels for her; to the point of waiting at her door for nearly five minutes after she went inside, just smiling and sighing.

He hummed a small song as he left and my heart warmed at the sight of him so happy.

She sat me in her bed once she'd taken care of everything, bringing a few crystals and stuff I had no idea how to describe with her.

“How did you meet Benjamin?” I asked, not thinking about it for a second.

“Oh, we went to class together and...” She stopped in her tracks and turned to me, the smile she'd worn vanishing. “How do you know his name? I don't remember calling him by his name after I saw you.”

My heart skipped a beat — if that was possible in a ghostly form.

“I... Okay, don't freak out.”

“Freak out?”

We looked at each other, unsure of what to say next. I

Remnants of the Past

looked to the window of the bedroom, trying to avoid looking into her eyes as I recollected my thoughts.

“I think... you’re my grandmother.” My voice had started lowering as I spoke, cracking at the very end. I tried to keep my hands still, not fumble them. I sounded like a lunatic.

“You aren’t making fun of me, are you?” She squinted her eyes.

“I’m afraid not.”

“Okay, because heaven knows I’m not about to sit here and have you prank me.”

“I know, I know. It sounds crazy, even to me but—” I took a deep breath. Now I was the one freaking out “—you’re called just like my grandmother, Ben I’m completely certain is my grandfather, my mother is called Charlotte and...”

“And your name is my second favorite.” I nodded and we both sat in silence for a while. Dorothea bit her lower lip and furrowed her eyebrows. “The way you’re talking about it. We never met, right?”

“No. This is my first time.” I looked at her and turned my mouth to the side. “You didn’t get to meet mom either.”

Her mouth opened slightly and her eyes went wide, tearful at the discovery that she’d never live the life she probably dreamt about. There was no pretty way to tell her that, no nice tiptoeing over it without hurting her, and it shattered my

heart. We were only two girls in our twenties chatting in a bed, and although it was the first time we'd met, it was as if a mutual sense of understanding had just swept through us. Dorothea reached for my cheek and caressed it.

“May I ask what happened?”

“Ben said there were some complications at birth but I never dared to ask too much as a kid. Not only because I didn’t understand it, but also because it hurt him to remember that day even decades later.” She looked down, tears now running down her face, and I grabbed her hands. “He never stopped loving you. He always told mom and I about you, and even though he was always really stubborn in not wanting to have photos taken of him...”

“He still believes those are a bit demonic?” She chuckled through her tears.

“A little.” I now felt like crying too, the burning sensation stuck in my eyes and throat. “He made a small altar in your bedroom with some necklaces and a couple trinkets you got on your wedding day. I...” I smiled at her. “I’m going to miss him.”

“He... oh.”

“He lived up to eighty-four, and gave mom a happy life he always said he hoped you’d be proud of. It’s because of you two that I believe in soulmates.”

Dorothea caressed my cheek and smiled at me, her breath

Remnants of the Past

shallow. “I’m sure I’ll be.”

She then held my face close to hers and we joined our foreheads. “Thank you for telling me this.”

A tingling sensation started burning in my face, warming my whole body as it extended through it. I felt tears falling into my hands as I held my grandmother’s — her hand shook a little under mine — although at this point, I was unsure if they were mine or hers.

“Thank you for coming to meet me, my sweet child.” She said. “Tell your mother I love her.”

I remained with my eyes closed for a bit as that warmth went away, slowly but surely, and I suddenly felt a pressure on my back. When I opened my eyes once again, I was once again laying on my grandfather’s couch, tears running down my cheeks and my hand grasping to my t-shirt with the same strength I’d held my grandmother’s one.

The room was now silent, and as I sat up, I could see the record player still in the back of the room where we’d placed it, the needle lifted, as the disc hissed like rain. Besides that, only the sound of my tears falling to the ground and the sniffing filled the room.

I walked up to the record and held it in my hands.

Had that really happened? Or was it just a product of my tired mind?

Sofia B. Polo

I slid the record back into its sleeve with as much care as possible, as if that could keep the warmth from leaking out, and tucked it into my bag, placing a hand atop and taking a deep breath.



Puzzle Answers

C R O S S S W O R D D A N S W E R S

A C R O S S

1 . M E M O R Y
2 . P A S T
3 . H I S T O R Y
4 . C H I L D H O O D

D O W N

5 . R E M I N I S C E
2 . P H O T O G R A P H
6 . S C R A P B O O K
7 . S O U V E N I R
8 . F L A S H B A C K

W O R D S E A R C H



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