Miss You, Pop!

I was never a big fan of Coleslaw. My pop would make me eat it almost every time I came over. I ate it every time. I think I ate it because I loved him and I didn’t want to let him down, even in a meniscal way like that. Because of him I now like coleslaw and a multitude of other things like mustard, hot sauce, cabbage, and all of their variations.

I walked by his house every day before and after school. He moved to get closer to me, I think. As each day went by his movies got old and the coleslaw became too much, and I didn’t come over as often as I knew I could have. In the back of my mind, I knew I would regret it someday, but I convinced myself in every passing of his driveway that I would somehow make up for it.

I feel foolish now even knowing that I thought that.

Two years later, my family and I moved into Pop’s house so that we could invest in a nicer home down the road. I was excited to move farther down the street because it meant I didn’t have to walk as far to the bus stop anymore and I was at least… eight houses closer to my friends at the time.

By this time, I had forgiven God for what he had taken from me, and with forgiving came forgetting.

The house smelt of Pop, it contained all of his things and had all the floors that would creak under his footsteps.

At first, it was nostalgic. Later, it became a haunting.

With each smell, I searched for him.

With each knick-knack found, I asked him questions aloud.

And with every creak, my head would turn.

Obviously, he was never there.

The cooking was never his, and neither were the disgruntled channel changings or the careless pan clankings.

All of what represented him in my mind was no longer him and it stung every single time.

Time moved on and now I wonder what would have been if he had lived longer.

Who would I be?

What would he think of me if he were to see me now?

What life and stories died with him because of the lack of searching or attentive ears?

Did he have anything left on his bucket list?

Is there anything he wanted to tell me?

He passed away while I was off at camp.

It was the fourth grade and camp was a whole ffoouurrr ddaayyss lonnggg, during a school week no less. And to go on the trip, two things had to be true. You were to have a signed permission slip by the date of release, and you were not to have over three conduct marks during that school year. I had three.

I remember begging a teacher who was on the brink of destroying my dreams to not do so.

I pleaded and cried with her, promising I would be better. I really meant it and I was better behaved for the rest of the time preceding the coveted experience.

He passed away on the second day of that trip.

I had no idea he was even close to death at the time, and I don’t think my parents were that much aware either.

I wish Mrs. V would have crushed me that day. I wish she didn’t believe in me when I told her I could be better.

I would have shat on her desk four consecutive times for four consecutive conduct marks so I could have seen him on that day.

But I didn’t see him on that day.

I didn’t hear all of his stories or input.

There was no goodbye or frame of reference given.

Instead, I was met with a lie, silence, a gathering, and a drop.

I never understood or really believed in the idea of disbelief or denial before that day.

Lemme tell you, it's real. It’s very real.

I miss my pop. My dad reminds me of him a lot sometimes.

So at least I have my dad!