

The Green Box
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One day we found a green box
In the closet
Stored in the back
Faded colors reminiscing of years and
Years before I was even born

Neatly stacked photos
Of when your hair wasn't as faded to gray
Young and filled with ambitious dreams
Unlike your wrinkled hands that have
Grown tired from time and work

I look at these photos again and again
Trying to connect the pieces
To find out why time wasn't the only thing that changed

A pair
Dancing by the Christmas tree
Photos of the two of you
Next to each other
It almost feels like a dream
Nothing like how things really are
Something lost long ago
That can't show the absence of him

An absence of a husband
My grandmother tucking in sheets and
Saying goodnight to her two kids
As she leaves the house working late night shifts
I still wonder how she didn't let him get the best of her
With all the wars he must have started in her head

An absence of a father
I can never understand how my mother felt
Like she was waiting for a ghost to return home
Eight years old and learning to live without him around
Small talk and short conversations can never replace
The counting years he was gone

An absence of a grandfather
An invisible part of my life
As if I never met him or seen him
I only know his short hellos and goodbyes
It's as if he has never existed
As if he was so far gone
But I have nothing to forget from him
So distant that I can never say
That he is my grandfather
But he could never fit the missing piece of the puzzle
Making my family feel whole

So we sit on the carpet
My mother, my sister, and I
Only expressing feelings
Through our eyes
Because no photos
Could ever be enough to know
The unknown
Cameras depicting what he was before
Could never describe who he is now
Because he made us lose more than he could ever give back

But I understand why my grandmother
Keeps these photos in the green box
Stored in the back of the closet
As if she never felt the love she had back then
To fade away
As if he was never here at all