

English 100

Formal Assignment #1: Narrative Project

October 15, 2018: Draft #1

Sunday Memories

By: Comfort Queh

I stroke my hands through her powder aged hair, making sure to grab every strand as I neatly plait the first section straight down, making sure not to braid too tightly. After one braid, she takes a look into her chestnut mirror that matches nicely with her bedroom dresser set that my aunt picked out for her.

I bite my lips patiently waiting for her approval to continue the cornrows she requested. As her eyes examine the straight plaited braid, the corner of her eyes starts to crinkle after just a few seconds, revealing every bit of wrinkles that tells a story of her life's journey. Satisfied, I continue on with the next braid.

Every now and then I manage to catch a glance at the "21" inch Sony TV placed at the end of the right side of the dresser; making sure I catch every bit of drama occurring on an episode of "American Dreams."

Even though she didn't really care much for the show, my grandma always watched it with me. Not that she really had a choice; it just became a part of our regular routine. Every Sunday, a little before eight in the evening, she called me up to her bedroom. She talked my ears off for a little about the history of my name as I sat on her comfy twin size bed quietly, like an eager little girl waiting on her grandma to read her favorite bedtime story. Each time became more interesting and exciting as if it was my first time hearing the story.

"Con-shea," she would always start off.

My grandma had a nickname for all of her grandchildren, but I always wondered how she came up with Con-shea. All my cousins had stories behind their nicknames, which she would share with them; but for me, she only told the story about my birth name. So I accepted that there probably wasn't one.

“Yes grandma.”

“You know you have a very special name, right?” she would say.

“Why is so special, Grandma?” I asked, pretending not to know.

“You’re named after my youngest daughter “Comfort,” she would say. “After she passed away, you were born. Your mom thought it would be a great idea to honor her memories by giving you her name.”

Her eyes would light up, revealing every bit of wrinkle around it, making her pupils huge like the ocean covered in waves on a windy day, every time she told me this story. Filled with emotions, she continued.

“Oh my sweet daughter, she was so quiet and caring. But when she entered a room, her smile lit up the entire space.”

I always found myself submerged in the story, as if I was the main character my grandma was talking about. I so eagerly imagined me as my aunt even though I never got to meet her. My grandma spoke so highly of her that I was convinced she herself too believed I was the “Comfort” she had once birth into existence

For six years, this was how we spent our Sunday evenings, and neither of us got tired with it, but it would change.

Our routine took a drastic change summer of 2005, when I convinced my dad to let me visit my mom in New Jersey for my summer vacation. After ten years of being apart from my mom, my dad was finally allowing me to go.

I felt like a child receiving a red tootsie roll pop from her doctor after getting her flu shot. It was also my first time out of Pennsylvania since we moved to the United States six years ago. I was eager to see my mom, so we too start our someday Sundays routine.

Pushing aside my Sunday's routine with Grandma, I managed to squeeze my entire wardrobe into the medium gray suitcase my dad purchased for her two days before my trip. Leaving enough space in the pocket of the suitcase, I placed my two Sunday best shoe to match the outfits I would wear when going out with my mom.

The summer with her mom started as a new adventure filled with many different faces. The first few faces I would see were my aunt and uncle from my mom's side of the family.

"This is my daughter, Comfort" she would always say, with the widest smile on her face whenever I would meet my aunt and uncles who hadn't seen me since I was 3 years old.

I didn't know if she was proud of me being her daughter, or if she was just happy to finally have a chance to spend time with me; either or, I would soak in each moment like it was my last, since I didn't know the next time my dad would allow me to come visit her again.

After a month in Jersey, the phone calls from my dad started. He would always tell my mom the news, which she would later on pass down to me. The first call was about my grandma being hospitalized from having a stroke. This was her second stroke; the first stroke left her with a walker because she no longer could balance her body without extra help; but she'd survived it. She would survive this second one too, I thought to myself. I didn't know if I really believed that, but it helped me feel better for not cutting short my stay with my mom.

I continued with the summer, unfazed by the news about my grandma. The summer would soon be over, so she and I could go back to our Sunday's routine. I held on to our routine to relieve my conscience from the guilt I was feeling. That was the only medicine I was willing to take to ease the pain away. After a couple dosages, I would need a stronger prescription for the phone call I would later receive.

It was just another blazing hot summer evening; I was in my room getting dressed when I heard the house phone ringing. It was July 22, 2005, two days after my fifteenth birthday when my dad told me the bad news.

My mom was allowing me to go see *Hustle and Flow*, so I was excited because that's all I really wanted for my birthday. I didn't know what was more exciting, going to see a rated R movie or getting to see it on the day it first premiered in theater. Since I was underaged, I would have to go with my older brother who was nineteen years old, but I was okay with that, after all I was getting to see Terrance Howard and Tariq P Henson in action.

I was in the bathroom tying up my hair into a ballerina bun, which I was extremely obsessed with at a young age, when my mother called me into the living room. She was sitting down on the couch with this look I had never seen before. The phone was in her right hand glued to her ear. I wasn't sure who she was talking to; but why would she call me if she was on the phone, I wonder.

“Yes, mom!”

She looked up at me and handed me the phone.

“Your father wants to talk to you.”

For a minute, I thought that was the reason for the look; she was talking to one of her least

favorite person in the world. Of course, that was reason enough for the distasteful look on her face.

I took the phone and sat next to the empty space she was patting, signaling to me to sit.

“Hi,dad!”

“Con.shea!”

Unlike grandma, my dad only called me by my nickname when he was feeling bad about something, so I started thinking what could be wrong.

“How are you enjoying Jersey?” He continued with the small talk.

“It’s fun dad, it’s really fun!”

“How was your birthday?”

At that moment, I realized he didn’t really care about how I was spending time with my mom because he didn’t even care about birthdays. He was just easing me into the blow he had called to deliver.

I started to think that maybe he had changed his mind, and I would have to return home earlier than expected. Finally, over with the small talk, I decided to just end it.

“Is everything okay, Dad?”

“Con.shea, your grandma just passed away.”

“No, she didn’t!”

Those words came out so easily. I wanted it to not be true, so saying it out loud, I guess, lead me to believe that it wasn’t!

Not realizing that my mom had already pulled me closer, until I felt the warmth of her silky,

leathery skin as her body absorbed the teardrops dripping from my eyes. I began to shrink as she hugged me back into the child she once carried in her womb.