



Of Blessed Memory

Miriam Berne

My mother never bought Pop-Tarts or fruit snacks
 To this day it is a special treat to see Lucky Charms
 sitting in the highest cabinet
 and we never had cable, my sister and I had to sleep on pull-out couches
 over at my grandmother's one-bedroom apartment
 to watch "SpongeBob" for so long
 that we had headaches
 My grandmother let us eat breakfast for dinner
 and put as much Cool Whip on our frozen fruit as we wanted
 and we could eat in front of the television
 "They need this" she'd tell my mother
 At five am we would wake to the sounds of clanging pots and pans,
 an alarm that meant we'd be going home in just a few hours, in time for
 her to go visit my
 grandfather
 in the nursing home as she did every day, alone
 in her silver Saturn

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We go sometimes, making the trek from Evanston to China Town
 in my mother's new blue Mazda,
 not being in the Honda
 it doesn't feel right;
 not seeing my grandfather in the apartment
 or walking down the steps he hit his head on so many years ago,
 the steps my sister and I used to hide on, him playing along,
 or the wall still lined with blood
 from a fall that let my grandmother stay in the apartment but

not him

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We no longer visit my grandfather

At least not near Chinatown

He has since been moved

six feet under

But I still talk to him through photos of us writing together

and summer camp rabbi's

who tell stories of him,

my eight-year-old campers confused

why their counselor is crying

this summer my sister and I slept over

at my grandmothers for the first time

in 10 years

SpongeBob was already playing

and Cool Whip waiting on the table