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My Mother's Hands

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Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"'When will you be home?' my mother asked worriedly. 'We miss not having you around.'"

Cover Page Footnote

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My Mother's Hands

"When will you be home?" my mother asked worriedly. "We miss not having you around."

"I miss you too Momma, but don't worry. I should make it there in about two weeks, and I can't wait for a taste of your pie."

As we said our good-byes and I hung up the phone, I reflected on how the year had sped by. I hadn't really done all that I had wanted to do. Tears slipped down my face as I realized just how much I missed my family and our rituals. Sunday morning brunch, Saturday night's dinner and a movie, and our morning ritual of my dad drinking coffee and reading a book at the table in his underwear. These are things that I can remember since childhood. A constant that isn't missed until it's gone.

Saturdays were always my favorite because I didn't have to take a bath, and I spent the afternoon with either my mother or father, or both, spending quality time. My parents would each take a child or two and spend a few hours doting over us with activities that made us feel special. One of my favorite things to do was to make these mouth-watering apple pies with my mother.

The kitchen table was too tall for me, so I would stand on a chair and my mother would stand behind me. The first task was to remove the skin. A sharp knife was trustingly placed in my hands. My mother's hands guided my small ones as we applied pressure until the skin, crisp red and green, curled off the knife. The fresh flesh revealed underneath was juicy and dribbled down my plump arms and onto my clothes.

"Here, like this, eh?" Her soft Canadian accent captivated my attention as she guided me in slicing the apple lengthwise and removing the core. Patiently, delicately she wielded the paring knife like an artist who intimately knows her brushes. My mother's long brown hair brushed my face lightly. Her hands felt soft over mine. Her voice deepened and became a soft, coaxing hum. She slowly swayed back and forth with me in between her busy arms. She smelled sweet, like a mixture of soap and her own goodness escaping through her pores. It comforted and protected me when I was near her. It still has this effect.

There were other smells. The kitchen smelled of apples and cinnamon. Flaky crusts were browning to perfection in anticipation of being filled, or fulfilled, with the sweet, fruity concoction; and the underlying smells. The old beaded board

that paneled the kitchen, as comforting as the smell of an old book at the library. The scent of summer invading through the screen door. The wind bringing stolen scents of roses, recent rain, and cut grass. The fresh-washed curtains stirred playfully in this errant breeze.

Together we filled the bottom crusts and placed the top crusts, with their distinct decorations, over the fruit.

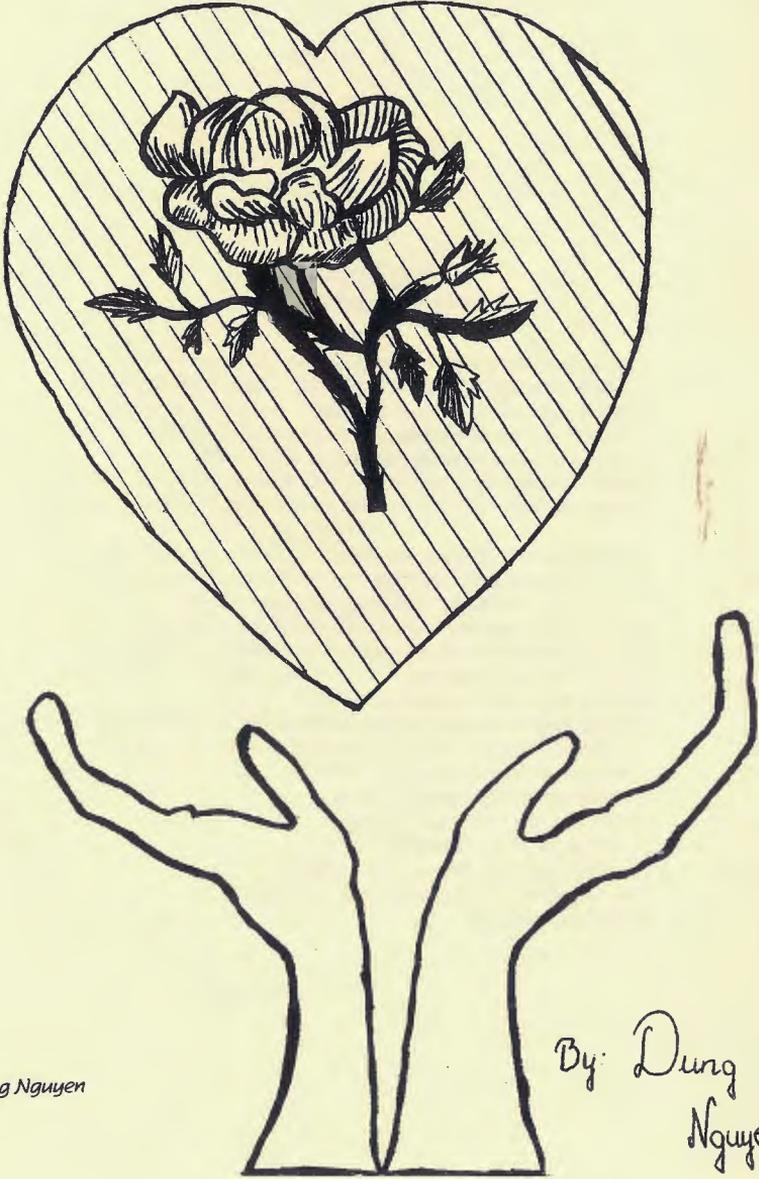
"Momma, can we put leaves on this one?"

"We can put anything we want on it. This is our creation."

When decorated to our liking, we ceremoniously placed the pies in the oven and patiently waited for them to bake. The best part was our liberty to take a sample taste to insure that the pie was a success.

Those Saturdays became lost in the shuffle of teenage years, and now my mother only bakes for the holidays. Those days are some of my favorite memories of time spent creating with, and being nurtured by my mother. I sadly realized how old she looked the last time I saw her. Her once soft hands are now cracked and rough from hard work. Work that provided money for a better life for me than she had. It isn't often enough that I share my thoughts, feelings, and hopes with her. She has given me so many treasures and sacrificed so much for me. How can I thank her for teaching me to be patient, loving, and believing in me? How could I ever repay my mother?

— *Suzanne M. Wood*



- Dung Nguyen

By: Dung
Nguyen