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Locks of Love

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

"Every morning I resort to brushing my hair with the same brush. The pale yellow handled brush that belonged to my grandmother up until a few years ago when she died. The brush, older than me at the age of twenty-one, still knows how to give my hair the massage it has loved for years with its powerful, yet smooth bristles, each one still in tact."

Cover Page Footnote

This prose is available in The Angle: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2004/iss1/15
Every morning I resort to brushing my hair with the same brush. The pale yellow handled brush that belonged to my grandmother up until a few years ago when she died. The brush, older than me at the age of twenty-one, still knows how to give my hair the massage it has loved for years with its powerful, yet smooth bristles, each one still in tact.

As the smooth edges of the brush’s fingers run their course through the layers of damp, wavy hair each morning, I try to picture how my grandmother would have done it. Surely she would have pulled it up tight in rubber bands without a single hair dangling down, for she always thought that little girls should always look neat and clean. Each time I clench my grandmother’s brush with my palm’s firm grip and watch the long locks separate from one another and fall into their own separate place, my memory traces back to my childhood as a six-year old spending each summer day with my grandmother.

I can still see the sunlight peering though the windows of the kitchen while my sister and I line-up in front of the sink for grandma to come and do our hair. A tall glass full of water would be sitting on the counter next to the porcelain basin waiting to be used. She would sneak in through the back door to catch us by surprise. She had just finished hanging the newly washed clothes on the line to dry amid the warm July air. On her way to the bathroom to pick-up our favorite brush, she would ask, “Who’s first?” My sister and I would both raise our hands with excitement because we both wanted our hair done first.

I would be the first to go all the time because I was always the one closest to the basin of the sink. Of course my sister was never pleased with this decision. Ignoring her pouting face, grandma would rotate me around so my back was to her. She felt that the back of the head was a better angle in which to work from. With a firm grip around the yellow plastic handle, she dipped the head of the brush deeply into the tall glass of water twice before dabbing away the excess water, that lingered on the brush, against the side panel of the basin. The wet brush caressed my hair until it lay sopping wet on my shoulders with the glare of the sun reflecting itself upon it. She divided an even part right down the center of my scalp and scooped up the dangling wet hair, first one side and then the other. Wrapping each side in rubber bands that she took from grandpa’s work desk and created two pigtails. Her final little touch would always be to curl her pointer finger around the freshly tied hair creating one, long, perfect ringlet curl. She would always say to me, “Ahhh isn’t that nice. . .This is how I used to
do Mommy’s hair when she was your age.”

I felt honored when I eventually got to return the favor to my grandmother for all the times she had pampered me. It was when she laid comatose in her hospital bed at Parkridge Hospital. Her body, swollen twice her usual size, was being kept alive by the fluids that were also killing her. I sit on the edge of her bed with the weight of my body resting on my left shoulder. I stroked her coarse hair with the tips of my frightened fingers, just as I remember her doing when I was a child. Except now she is the child, lying helplessly amid a sea of tubes and machines, and I am the adult that she used to be.

With not enough time to say goodbye, she slipped away right from under my fingers. The only thing I have left as a constant reminder of her is that brush. The brush that was once hers which is now mine. The only thing that is a constant reminder of what I had. The only thing that I wish I still had and never took advantage of because I always believed it would be there. The only thing that knows what I like and knows exactly how I like it. The only thing that produces a vivid memory of love and tranquility. The only thing that I have left, for bright summer days are no longer the same.

Megan Lindley

Foresight

I hide behind my smile
behind the charcoal lined eyes
behind my midnight black locks

tears of purple mercury stream down my face
it oozes out from the corners of my mouth
and from my open nostrils

I hide behind the covers of yesterday
make the bed—
no telling of where I’ve been the day before—
I start the new day fresh . . .

the scent of orange juice and roses
keep me going

my eyes are going to be the death of me