

Remembrance

by Hadrian Reeves

what i would give
to revisit my childhood
through the lens of
my present knowledge-
but all i have left are memories.

i remember the exciting place
we called Nanny's,
where all kinds of family
stopped by every now and then
on their way home from work.

i remember riding the Thompson Valley bus,
sitting as close to but as far from my brother
until we, the last stop, were all alone,
watching the mountains blur around us.
the buzz of the broken bus speakers.

i remember the face of my grandfather,
sitting comfortably in his purple chair
when he saw us, the joy.
“Look who’s here!”

i had forgotten for so long
that i remembered.

i remember throwing down my book bag
and being asked to do my homework now
while the peanut butter crackers
(yes, only the Peter Pan kind)
were being fixed for me on a napkin.

i remember crouching behind
the beloved purple chair
to find the camouflage bag of toy cars,
which each generation added to,

and emptying it where no one was sitting.

i remember Pawpaw getting up
from his chair to go to the kitchen
and in those brief minutes,
stealing his seat and eagerly waiting
for his reaction and laughter.

i remember him offering to share
his ice cream and smiling,
knowing i would refuse-
the pecan chips looked like little bugs to me.

i had forgotten for so long
that i remembered.

i remember the smell
of my grandmother's spaghetti
boiling over the stove- how i hated it.

why did she always put so much
on my plate if i only liked the bread?

i remember sitting on the arm
of the old leathery seat
watching my grandfather do word searches
from a slim new Dollar Store book.
sometimes i found the words.

i remember the disappointment of seeing
headlights shine down the driveway
and the plates set nicely on the table-
we would have to leave soon
and the toy cars weren't put up yet.

i remember giving out hugs while Nanny searched
for a spare Tupperware bowl
and the light on the porch fading
as the car bumped down the gravel home.

i had forgotten for so long
that i remembered.

i remember visiting him this past Christmas,
trying to remember him as he once was
instead of the person who now sat beside me
in a helmet and tracking bracelet
staring downwards.

i remember watching him
look around the table at these strange people
who smiled so bright and intently at him,
turning their heads to hide their tears
as he struggled to lift up his fork.

i remember him laughing
and telling only remnants of jokes
which some of us were old enough

to remember.

we laughed but were not eased.

i remember him staring at me, smiling,

trying to move his lips, but nothing.

i could see it in his eyes, fixed on mine,

but my name quickly departed.

he had forgotten for so long

but for that second, he remembered.