

The air is hot and moist, like a
wet, wool blanket over my skin.
Anticipation moves me outside to see
if the stiff air will penetrate. The stoic
clouds stare back at me. Not a glimpse of
blue nor a drop of cold water. My eyes are
overwhelmed by gray sheets.
A sticky grayness punctures my
skin and leaks into me. It fills me with
a heavy coat of depression.

My thoughts sink back into time.
One-thirty in the morning,
the phone rings. My giggles spill out
as a friend and I scramble to answer it.
Hysterical with aches of laughter,
my hello bumbles out...
"He died."
Said so mildly, I could not comprehend.
The words reached me seconds later.
Throw the phone, as if it were the one
that killed my grandfather.
The memory fades out, static thoughts...

Rain

We are in my older sister's car,
on our way to Pennsylvania, to the funeral.
A Beatles marathon is on the radio.
We drive in silence except for our reminiscing.
Mingled with "Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away..."
and "She's leaving home after living along for so many years..."
Tears running down our cheeks and
staining the interior of my sister's car.
Stains that won't come out.

Sitting shivah for the second time
in the past four months. Numbness stings
my insides; I've lost my paternal grandmother and
maternal grandfather. I feel as though everything is
slipping between my fingers and
no matter what I do to
grasp at it, it will
slide away.

My memory is fading again,
this time meshing the two deaths
that
occurred that year.
My grandmother in the hospital,
her mouth hung open, cancer
nibbling at
her body and sucking her life out.
I held her hand as she puffed
words to me.
I couldn't speak.
My tears splashed onto her
porcelain hands.

The last time I spoke to
my grandfather was
before his heart surgery.
As my mother handed me the phone she said,
"This will probably be the last time you will get to talk to him for awhile..."
Irony. "Awhile" is
what the family expected.
His death was the
"result of procrastination; had he gone for surgery just a few weeks before..."
only before didn't matter.
Hearing the doctors say that made me
want to smash all the knives and
tools they'd used on my grandfather during the operation.

by Hannah Goodman

The tense air has begun to relax.
I look up to see the clouds drifting across the sky.
My memory has floated to the back of
my mind, where it was resting before.
I close my eyes and let nature comfort me.
The wind against my arms, brushing over me.
I let the pores in my skin open to the sky, knowing the
grayness won't weigh me down this time.
I lick the water from the corners of my mouth.
I put my pen and notebook aside. I want to enjoy the rain.