

“Inspiration” is a heavy word, but not the kind of heavy that weighs down on you, rather the kind that is so powerful you just *have* to acknowledge it.

Inspiration is all around us. It can be found in a sunny day, in the pouring rain, in the scent of wet leaves or the brilliant colors of a spring flower. But even people can get us inspired.

For me it was my maternal grandfather. He was a veteran who fought during World War 2nd and was made prisoner by the German armies, spending two years in a labor camp in Hannover. He was the wisest and most sensitive man I have ever known, and whenever we were together (which was a lot) he would share with me the memories of his time as a war prisoner, and the incredible thing is he didn't hold sorrowful memories only, in his reminiscences there were tales filled with hope and kindness too.

We had a special bond, my grandfather and I, and growing up his love for me was like a lighthouse in the middle of a sea storm. He lived a meaningful, intense life. He was a tireless worker, a devoted husband and father, and he also was the best grandfather a child could desire.

When I was 11, he passed away, and the lights in the lighthouse went off. His death is, still to this day, the greatest loss I have ever experienced. He was the only real father I had ever known, and for the longest time I have struggled to restore my balance. I was only a kid and had never lost anyone before. Losing him was like losing a limb, it was the end of an era, and the emptiness left was real and physical.

In 2013, fourteen years after his death and three years after my grandmother's, the house I had grown up in was sold to a newlywed couple. My aunt told me she was glad the house had been bought by those people, for she was sure they would be as happy in there as my grannies had been. I couldn't see it that way, though. Selling that house meant that never again, as long as I lived, I would be able to set foot in there. I was saying goodbye yet again, this time to the vestiges of what once was. I lost a big chunk of my heart that day.

The years following my grandfather's absence have felt unnaturally long, and I've been lost for what felt like forever. I didn't know what to do or what I wanted anymore, everything I tried never seemed to work, I rarely made the right decisions and had the oppressing feeling I was stalling. I was like a beam without his pillar, and no replacement existed that could make up for that loss.

At some point I even moved abroad to start afresh and leave everything behind, but that didn't work either. After one failure too many I realized that even if my grandfather had been alive, the only person I could really rely on was myself. There was no point in grieving and thinking of the what ifs only, as no one was going to turn the ends of time, and what had happened couldn't be changed.

That's when I started to try my best even harder than before, as I so much wanted for my life to be more than just ordinary. I won't say I haven't tripped over random obstacles here and there from time to time, but I've managed to become a person I'm proud of, a person my grandfather would have been proud of.

One night in October last year I had a dream. I was in my grannies' house, sweeping the floor. It was the sunset, and nobody was home. I was in my mother's room when I had this strong feeling that somebody else was in the house with me. I don't know why, but in the dream I knew exactly who that someone was. I felt a sudden rush of fear, as my grandpa had been long gone and I was afraid to face him. Then I thought: “whatever happens, happens”, and went straight to the kitchen (where I knew he was). I saw him standing by the french door and without thinking twice ran straight towards him. We hugged each other tight, then I looked up at him and said: “Everything's alright, grandpa”.

Still to this day, I don't know why I uttered those words. Even though I've reached some important goals, I'm still so far away from the finish line and have yet to find my place in this world. But I guess I will have to stick to those words for now: It *is* all right, after all. I made it and my grandpa is still here with me somehow. He's my inspiration, and as long as my memories stand, so will he; like a sunny day, the pouring rain, the scent of wet leaves or the brilliant colors of a spring flower.