

## **Banana**

Anonymous

The room was generic; it bore no personal touches or sentimental keepsakes. It was the kind of sad, lackluster place that seems to drain you of energy the second you step inside of it. Scanning the room you'd find that the only objects with color were the faded green mesh curtains, the baby blue blanket at the foot of the bed, and the plastic pink water pitcher resting near the sink. There were no machines beeping, demanding your attention. There was no oxygen streaming through a nasal cannula. There was no IV drip to speed up or slow down. There were no signs of intervention.

There was, however, a radio playing. It was an AM station that filled the room with music of which I assumed was from the '40s, based on the Bing Crosby and Billie Holliday. Nana loved that station. She seemed to respond to the music, her head slightly moving from side to side with a distant grin and glazed over eyes. She'd occasionally extend out her arms; I'd like to think it was to have her hand held. So, I took it for a while, assuring her it was almost over.

Sitting there, I couldn't help but smile at the juxtaposition of her recently dyed and curled hair with her present state. Her hair always had to be done up, and her girls kept it that way long after she couldn't do it herself, long after her body and mind had given up on her.

She was frailer than ever and her thin legs were ice cold. She fell into and out of a sleepy stupor, and there were times in between the two when we thought she had passed. It was evident in her fidgeting and audible discomfort when the morphine was starting to wear off. Watching someone in pain could break your heart.

My mother and I periodically shifted her body weight underneath the pillows, hoping to provide some relief until the next dose. We laughed about old memories and chirped about the pats game that was starting in a few hours. There was an odd sense of relief in the room, not quite sad, but not quite happy either.

She died of pneumonia 10 hours later.

Banana had actually been gone for about 5 years. She suffered from dementia brought on by small strokes and a handful of falls, slowly forgetting everyone she loved, every memory she had ever made. She left behind only the vessel of a loving, hardworking

woman. And for those five years she struggled, praying to die and to be with her husband; Conflicted, we prayed for the same.

Watching someone in pain could break your heart. Watching someone you love in pain does break your heart.