

REMEMBERING.

The old woman sat quietly in her chair enjoying the gentle breeze coming through the window.

She made a special effort this morning, putting on her best dress, as her Granddaughter Emma was coming on a rare allowed visit to the Home. Outwardly she looked calm, but inside she was bracing herself for the knock on the door and the inevitable questions Emma always asked, and the memories they would stir.

Emma arrived looking like spring and youth , her smile liquid sunshine.

“Oh Grandma, how I have missed you” she said giving her a soft kiss. Emma noticed her Grandmothers efforts to hide her paper thin skin with just a touch of makeup. There was also a subtle change that she could not put her finger on, acceptance of a long life lived, now, just going through the motions. She wasn’t sure – but something.

Soon the gentle probing questions began as they always did.

“Tell me what it was like Grandma, please, just one more time”

The memories came slowly at first, then flooding like a surging river.

“I saw my everyday life as Summer, carefree. Why would anything change, how could we have anticipated? We went to work on buses and trains, drove our cars anywhere we wanted to. If we needed groceries we would pop out to the local supermarket (back when there were supermarkets).

We also had Department stores where you could buy virtually anything, clothes, pots and pans, even equipment for playing sport.”

“Tell me my favourite thing Grandma, tell me about going out” pleaded Emma.

“We used to go out to places called Restaurants, where we could buy a meal, a waiter would come to our own table and ask us to select what we wanted for dinner. When the food was cooked it was delivered to our table. And the deserts, oh, ice-cream, apple pie, all there for the choosing.”

Emma shook her head trying to imagine what that world would be like, so unlike the sterile world she lived in now.

The old woman was now locked into her memories as she continued on “ and the holidays, every year, your Grandfather and I would decide which Country we would visit. And we would fly there in a plane, just pack our bags and go. Europe, the South Pacific, oh the sights we would see. Ancient wonders of the world, or walk on a deserted beach where there no other footprints to be seen. Listen to the constant lapping of the waves on the sand. Bliss. Sometimes we would go by ship, spend lazy days meeting new people, shake their hand. The nightly dances, you should have seen your Grandpa then, he could really move those feet.”

Seeing her Grandmother’s eyes fade over, now completely lost in those bygone times, Emma got up to quietly leave. At the door she turned asked one last question.

“Grandma, now that we live in this pandemic world, how would you describe it?”

“WINTER”.