

Geraldine Malone  
Exercise 3  
April 1, 2008

### Haunted by Beads of Blue

With little effort I recollect our final encounter. And each time I return, I can't escape a centripetal force guiding me towards a glowing angelic light. But the orb of life and death that surrounds her never fully comes to focus. It is her dusty blue eyes that lie at the center and entrance my sight.

She spent her final moments in a bland, fluorescent hospital room, intimated and listening to life's hourglass empty. Keeping time with the monitors' rhythmic beeps, each deadening drip lullabied her closer to the end. And on the last day, she awoke from her pre-death trance ready to say goodbye.

When I was lead to her bedside, I know I was not alone. Bits and pieces of the others in the room come and go from my memory, but mostly they are frosted over with a hazy white hue. I recall Sean holding her hand and saying "Goodbye, Grandmom." His formal, tenderhearted parting was the first time I witnessed such an act from my brother. Those same words would not utter forth from my mouth. We spoke without words.

Although her porcelain face and powdery locks could have easily blended into the crisp white linens, the downward angle she lay made her eyes illuminate the room. Two beads of blue stared upward and pulled me into her radiant light. With a drumming heart, I glided towards her heaving, draining body. I felt her eyes speak.

As I hovered her side, I took note of all I had never noticed. Her frame looked so frail yet seemed to glow with life. Everything I wanted to say but knew that circumstance would not allow surged through my sixteen-year-old mind and almost made its way through my quivering jaw. I yearned to make up for our differences, thank her for attending ten years of dance recitals and confess my hidden appreciation for the extra

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girlie presents she assembled for me, even though I had ungratefully told her time and time again I was too old for such things. I wanted to know her and fill in the rest of the pieces to her life's puzzle—the one she was just starting to assemble with me. Why hadn't I taken greater interest in her before she took sick?

She was the sporty grandmother I often ignored, opting to rearrange her pantry or rummage through her medicine cabinet and jewelry box, while she laid on the couch and shouted “Those Bums!” at one of the many football or baseball games blaring on the television set. Unlike my other grandmother, sit on the floor and play games or jump into swimming pools or even go on family vacations with me. She lived within walking distance of my house and I could stop in to see her whenever I wanted. I didn't know her like I wish I had. If she hadn't been given months to live, perhaps I never would have seen another side of her. With limited time, I learned to watch her mannerisms, like the way she painted her toenails as she watched her beloved sports teams, her cackling laugh, and the fact that she bought flavored sodas just for me. In our final months together, we sifted through old photo albums and I listened to her tell all that she had never shared before—or, maybe I hadn't listened. I never thought we were anything alike. I wanted to know more.

But at her beside, I said nothing. I didn't even vocalize a goodbye. Yet I felt at peace, knowing that she understood my love for her. Her eyes, pigmented with a blue found deep in the heart of the ocean, spoke to me. I see them in my dreams, when I let my mind wander, or when I want to think of her. But I also see them daily—in the flesh. They are the same eyes my father sees through.

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I cannot escape their sight or the last time I saw them. That day I thought her eyes longed to converse a message. I took it to mean goodbye. But why do I still see those eyes in my mind, as clear as day? Are they still talking to me and am I listening? Do they even mean anything? Maybe I'm making more of our last moment together. Maybe not.