

2/27/2026

Still Life

“Wha-what grade did you say you were in again?” Grandma asked for the tenth time this morning.

“9th Grandma.” I tried to be as patient as possible. “Would you like me to get you some orange juice?”

“I’ll just have a cup of tea dear.”

”But I thought Dr. Winthrop said—“

”Hush! Dr. Winthrop doesn’t know his elbow from his earlobe. Mother swore by her three cups a day. Well, that until she managed to pour one too many and lost her footing. Slipped right on her back and entered a much bigger tea party!”

I rolled my eyes and started towards the kettle.

”Stanley!” Grandma cheered.

Into the kitchen walked Stanley. The 107-pound bloodhound was old, but still waddled to Grandma with a high-wagging tail. Grandma murmured nonsense words to Stanley while showering him with kisses.

As Grandma inhaled her tea, I massaged Stanley’s hanging jowls. His droopy eyes looked up at me in woeful eagerness. I slipped him his expected bacon.

”So, what should we do after breakfast?” I asked Grandma, “Take Stanley on a walk?” The fat dog looked up at me again, this time more threatening.

Grandma didn’t respond. Per usual, she dozed off after finishing her tea. I sighed and looked down at the yellow tiles that lined the kitchen floor. Pink and purple tulips were painted

in every other square. The teapot Grandma uses had a similar print. The steam that came from it curled as it rose in the air. Beneath the pot, scattered biscuit crumbs added texture to the table.

I stood up. Barefoot, I walked outside onto the porch and settled in Grandma's rocking chair. Overgrown grass filled the lawn, and a broken road separated Grandma's house from the other elderly neighbors who lived across the street.

The morning breeze sighed softly as a family of robins sang up above. I looked at my grandmother through the window, who sat with her head tilted back and mouth open. The hum of her snores harmonized surprisingly well with the birds.