

My family use to have dinners at my grandparent's house for my dad's side of the family. We would all go to their house in Hollywood on a Saturday or Sunday and have a full three course meal, though it was usually deli so it's nothing too fancy. I would use my grandparent's house as my personal playground after dinner. That house was my favorite place in the whole world. I would sit at the yellow patterned table; topped with a fake flower arrangement in the breakfast room. I would look out the window for hours, watching cars pass by and people walking on the sidewalk with friends, family, or by themselves. In the kitchen I would play with the fruit shaped magnets that held pictures and notes to the refrigerator. The dining room itself was a sacred place where we all gathered for our dinners. The living room was my personal auditorium where I would put on shows, practice my gymnastics, nap on the couch that was in the back on the room, or play a leisurely game of poker with my brother where we would gamble with pennies found in the little ceramic wishing well that was in the corner of the room. The other rooms in the house were usually filled with the other people waiting for dinner, either watching the news or I Love Lucy in the tv/bar room. The back yard which was filled with fruit trees was my personal jungle. Every room in that house was special to me.

The hall that connected all these places was my favorite place of all to be. Its walls were decorated with pictures of my grandmother's family; people I was destined never to meet. All of them hold a very deep and special place in my heart. I would fixate on that worn family portrait. A family around a table. Some sitting and some standing. A very old man, the head of the family, stood in the center behind the rounded table. Next to him was the oldest child, a lovely dark haired girl who looked just like her mother. Beside her was a very ambiguous child only to be known to be a girl by her play dress. On the other side of the old man was a young boy who wore a cap only to make him seem as if he was about to go off and play any moment. On the right of the boy was the mother, a beautiful woman who wore her labors on her face. In a strange way it complemented her to have such lines on her face: a testimony to her children. Sitting down in front of her was a tired looking, yet very handsome, man. On his lap he is holding a crying baby who is blurry from her movement when the camera snapped the picture.

One night after dinner my grandmother caught me staring at the photo. She came over to me and pointed them out, telling me in a bright and blissful voice, "this is my mother, and this is my father". I fell in love with each member of my family as I noticed the resemblance between us all. I still love them; people who's blood runs through my veins, that I have never and will never meet. These people in the picture, my family, were killed in Poland during World War II while my grandmother was at school. I used to find these family dinners quite daunting once I got into my preteen years. However, when my grandmother pointed out all the people, my people, who's lives were stolen from them, I had learned right then to appreciate my family so much more. To see my grandparents happy and lively after all their suffering taught me a new sense of appreciation of my loved ones.

I wish it wasn't true, but it is possible for all those I love or even myself to be demolished in a quick second. I keep my family picture, my most prized possession, to remind myself that time can be short and that no one knows when anyone's time will be up. It is a hard thing to have as a main value considering how depressing it can be, but it does help to keep reminding myself to focus on the time that I do in fact have, as opposed to the time itself running out.