

All the Blessings I Failed to See

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I am grateful for the starry sky as I step out of my car and close the door. I don't think about the day prior to that moment of serenity. The chaotic mess of fourteen classes followed by a workday filled with favoritism and metaphorical eggshells I need to step over. Instead, I look to the stars and smile for I know that it is because of these small fragments of joy that I still hold my head high. I say hello to the dogs, petting their snouts, and greet my step-father as he asks me about my day. I go to my room, set my backpack down full of notes from the education that I am lucky enough to partake in. These daily pleasures that I sometimes take for granted. It wasn't always this peaceful. My past has been riddled with broken promises and paychecks far too thin to spread over the days. Yet, I had my mother for those first ten years and we needed nothing else. Those first ten years of my life shaped my future, whittling away pieces until the raw wood beneath was exposed. Ten years it was my mother and I and her three jobs holding us afloat like a raft until we saw the beacon of my step-father. Far away we went from the Sunshine lands to the land of Southern Bells and Sweet tea of the bluegrass covered hills of Kentucky. Covid soon followed, but that is not what shattered us. My step-dad was diagnosed with stage four kidney cancer. Then he was diagnosed with lung cancer, and an inoperable brain tumor. Four years later he is still here one kidney lighter and a million medications, bills and doctor visits heavier. His survival is one joy that I take for granted far too much. I am convinced that pain and joy can not exist without one another. Without pain and worse days how would one know what joy feels like? If all our days are filled with joy then can we truly appreciate the wondrous things that

surround us? I try to remember, try to breath in the fresh air, the star strew sky, my horses' neighs as they call me to fill their stomachs. I used to believe the whittler was chipping pieces of me away, taking away my sanitary, my happiness, but instead he was simply carving the aside rotten pieces to expose me to the little joys of the world I had failed to recognize through the shroud.