

Jonas Laughter
Frozen Plants
Flash Fiction

One last chore. With hands stiff from the aching cold you walk towards the woods with two buckets in hand, both full of dead and decaying plants. An act in which you bring lifeless plants to their final resting place, where they'll become fertilizer for towering giants older than you could imagine. With each step you walked towards the beaming sunlight that crept between the trees, feeling its warm embrace welcoming you into the brutal bliss of oblivion. You are the bridge between life and death: you create and destroy life cycles.

As you approach the mass grave you walked on and took for granted, the sun sneers down at you with bitter spite. You're not the usual one to bear this burden. You were put onto this task by your Grandmother; she used to do it herself, but now she can hardly walk.

You reach the edge of the sleeping forest and pour the bucket's contents into a pile of brown, yellow, soggy and rotten plants. Tears begin to form in your eyes, as you wish you could have poured the bucket any slower. For a minute you just stand there, staring absently into the woods, the warmth of the sun touching your face...just like Grandma used to. That warmth was fading now. Her eyes were turning glassy, her stature more shrunken. Just like plants, she herself had begun to wilt with time.

Reluctantly, you turn around and begin to walk back. With each step a memory briefly appears in your mind and fades just as fast, your few moments with her both taunting and rewarding you with each step forwards. Your vision is blurred from tears, but you see the figure of your Grandmother in front of you. She sat on her walker with her face down, her beloved dog resting lazily at her feet. Her labored breath was visible in the cold. You stopped in front of her, looking at the dog as to not make eye contact with a fading memory.

"The weather gets colder every year!" Her sentence was punctuated by a forced and awkward laugh. There was silence between you two, so you mustered all you could to reply:

"Sure does."

You both know the weather wasn't getting any colder.