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Our Spot at Big Wolf

Margaret Brunet
University of the Pacific

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The call had come through in a tiny, two-minute window when the three of us were all together. We didn't say anything else. We didn't even cry. We just sat there together under the stars.

Four years later, I am finally able to think of my grandma with her good face on, her true face, the person she was prior to the disease taking root in her mind. The woman I remember taking me to get smoothies after school and helping out in my kindergarten class is my grandmother—all the rest was brain death. And I am strong enough now to say firmly, confidently, that nothing that she ever said or did took place due to a lack of love for me or anyone else in her life. The grandma I got to know had more love than nearly anyone I've ever known. So now I think back mostly with nostalgia, sometimes with regret. There is a poignancy to my remembrance of her, knowing how proud she would be of the life I'm living if she had only lived long enough to see it.

A couple of months ago, I took my boyfriend of almost three years to Jamba Juice. The Raley's next door closed down years ago in favor of a newer version a few miles away, and I haven't really thought about it since. For some reason, though, on this not-quite-hot November afternoon, I rub my thumb across the dusty glass of the huge front windows and look inside.

Everything is exactly as it was, as though frozen in time. The large red armchair sits beside the side entrance,

its color dulled by a thick patina of dust. Empty magazine stands lurk beside empty registers; shelves that once stocked firewood and patio chairs are barren but exactly where I left them eight years ago. Large signs loom above empty aisles: Dairy, Pharmacy, Deli.

My boyfriend looks on, baffled as to why tears have suddenly started streaming down my face.

"She would have loved you," I tell him. "She would have loved you so much."

OUR SPOT AT BIG WOLF

MARGARET BRUNET

