

Grandparents

For Fall 2014, the Muses' Gallery features poems related to grandparents. This theme honors Iris Ingram, my grandmother, who celebrates her 100th birthday this November. She also encourages me with my poetry so this is a thank you for her love and support and for the all the grandparents out there. This theme definitely touched home for many writers. This Gallery contains portraits of some remarkable men and women. Thank you to all of the many poets who submitted poems and photographs - your interest and enthusiasm are deeply appreciated.

Enjoy!

E Equals

What is Albert Einstein doing
on my grandmother's bagel?

By

Out of a tenement-gray
storybook sky a disheveled man
no bigger than a nit
materializes on top of a poppy seed.

James Reiss

Wilmette, Illinois

He waves tiny arms & shouts, *Help me,
for God's sake, Frau Blocksberg!*

But my grandmother, hard
of hearing, stretches forth her ample hand
—all two hundred and fifty pounds of her
corseted bulk like Viennese butter—
& lifts him to her lips

whereupon Einstein leaps
onto her nose, scrambles
over the boulder of her cheek,
& (balanced on the lobe
of her great stone ear)
shouts, *For God's sake, Frau Blocksberg,
tell me your recipe for chicken soup!*



Iris Ingram

Clinging

By

Julie Isaacson

Highland Park, Illinois

My Bubbe Celia told me how they came.
They fled their Russian homes, clinging to their beliefs.
Clinging onto family staying behind, for one last hug.
They clung to the hope that they would re-unite. The fear of
the truth clung to them.

She was nine, and couldn't grasp what life would be,
clinging onto vague promises offered by her parents.
She clung to her mama's hand as they boarded the ship.
Below deck, her sister was pushed, and separated from them.

Through the rocky night, she and Sophie clung to each other's
hands, fingers entwined through the metal grate wall that
divided them. Clinging to terror if they lost each other.

She awoke to a crowd clinging to each other, as strong Lady
Liberty appeared through the fog. She waved to the
outstretched arm and torch.

Ship's horn and echo clinging in the air.

Pangs of hunger, clinging in her belly.

Sacred documents to cling onto, or risk being turned away.

A century later, I cling to her memories, and the scented
memory of her.

That Far Off Land

By

Jo Stewart

Chicago, Illinois

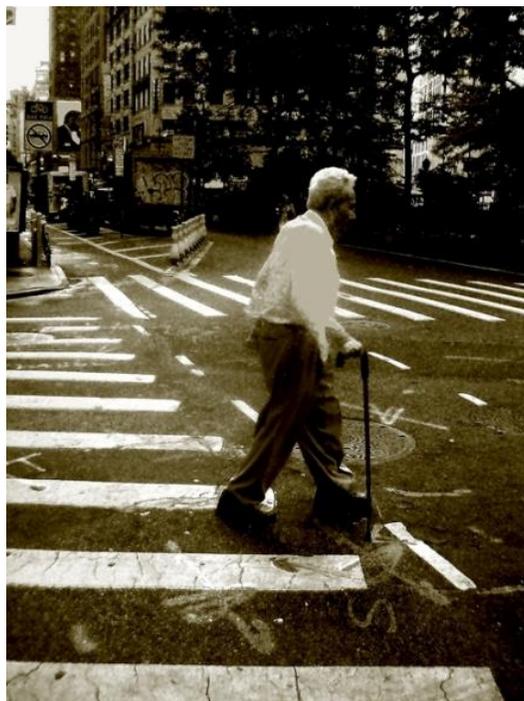
In that fuzzy time of childhood
an old man
kept pigeons in a coop
Nónno was his name

His handle bar — pure white
singed by red wine

Ten feet tall was he
This old one
This bird keeper
this father of mothers
ruler of the roost.

He strutted wildly
ranted wildly
Mothers and pigeons
trembled wings.

Yet gentle his treat
for little ones
sitting on his lap —
homemade bread
dipped in wine
for all who called him Nónno
in that far-off land
I dimly remember



James Paradiso, Photographer

Grandpa is a Farmer

By

Donna L. Ritter

Highland Park, Illinois

Grandpa is a farmer.
Working soil with his tractor,
fertilizing with cow manure.
He makes sure the crops will grow strong.
It isn't easy, that's for sure.

But no worries of the weather,
for Grandpa is a farmer,
who prays for rain and sunshine bright.
Never doubting God's creation,
strong faith the crop will turn out right.

Harvest time comes so quickly.
Where does the summer go?
Grandpa is a farmer busy,
as he hurries to and fro,
whirling combine makes me dizzy!

Now the crops are off to market.
He prays profits will be grand.
Faith abounds it will be all right.
For Grandpa is a farmer, who
looks forward to a future bright.

Winter comes.
The fields lay barren,
and he's thankful to take a rest.
Times like this make him realize,
Grandpa's a farmer truly blessed.

Quin Jordan's Prayer

By

Louie Clay

East Orange, New Jersey

I hope that I can give a baptistry
to the parish in Pinebluff someday.
I'll dedicate to the memory of Aunt Hazel,
who worked in the parish rectory long after
the rest of the family turned A.M.E.
They let her worship only as a servant
at white folks' weddings and funerals.
Otherwise she couldn't even sit
in the balcony where once she had sat
with my great-grandmother Watson
looking down on her white grandfather
who never ever would recognize those children.

Maybe the sculptor can capture the way Hazel's tongue
moved across the whole set of twelve dinner plates
in the kitchen, locked from view,

after old Bishop Caldwell told her that the colored help should use only the everyday ware.
And she licked every one of the finer plates!
It's time everyone now found out, her tongue in marble saying, "No!" forever and ever. AMEN.

This is an excerpt from a longer poem. Louie Clay (né Louie Crew), 77, is an emeritus professor at Rutgers University. Editors have published 2,363 of his essays, poems and photographs. He lives with Ernest Clay in an outlawed marriage for 39 years and a legal one for one year.



From the Louie Clay and Ernest Clay family photo album

Shelter

By

Eve Lomoro

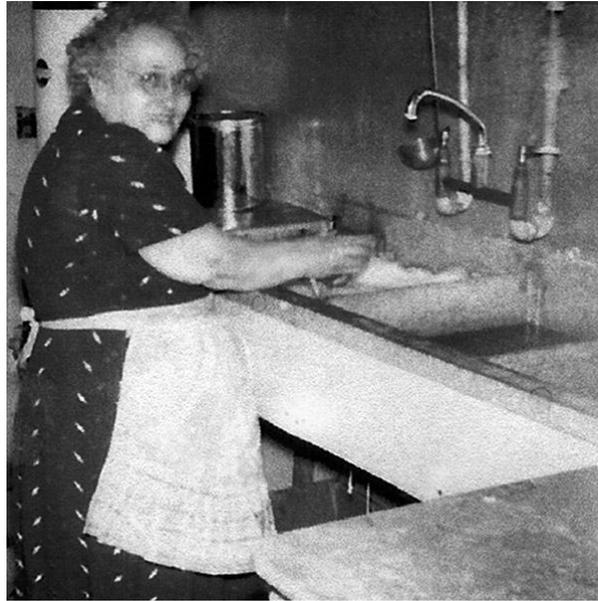
Aurora, Illinois

Early in the morning she stoked the pot-bellied stove, and went to the kitchen. With bony hands she stirred gravy in the cast iron skillet while biscuits baked in the oven.

When I woke, the floors were warm and food was on the table. With bony hands folded, she offered up a prayer before we ate. And on Sundays she took nickels from a handkerchief that she kept in her brassiere and gave them to us for the church collection.

At night she slept between my sister and me, clutched our hands with her bony fingers, spoke to the air around us with firm silence, securing our world. In the feather bed, we fell asleep, knowing next morning we would awaken to warm floors and homemade love.

"This poem was inspired by the memory of my grandmother, with whom my sister and I spent the better part of a school year during a very troubled time in our family."



Snapshot of Grandma Lohrum, 1954

Snapshot of Grandma Lohrum, 1954

By

Kathy Lohrum Cotton

Anna, Illinois

Round and under five-foot tall,
her ever-present apron stretches across
a print dress that will eventually reappear
in quilt squares. Grandma turns a thin-haired
head to smile, her heavy arms still tending
a sudsy sink in the canning kitchen.

I think of bread and butter pickles,
of moist mayonnaise cake,
Sunday morning biscuits and gravy,
fragrance of rising bread. I remember
Grandma's food more than I
remember this rotund woman.

I can't quote a single sentence
she ever spoke to me, but I'm sure
she loved the happy eight-year-old
who dogged her steps. Yes, quite sure.
For when I reached Grandmother's age
film-caught in gray-scale 1954,
I, too, lived loving a happy eight year old
who scraped my bowls and licked my spoons.

Will my granddaughter forget
those childhood moments spent with me?
It matters not. She will one day
see my smile in some old photo
and be quite certain she was loved.

Legacy

By

Roy Blokker

Lakeside, Montana



Gail Denham, photographer

It is my job, now,
To be a village,
To be a helper,
Opa, Grandfather,
More than a title,
More than five swift beats
On a sodden page,
Or the whiskers trimmed
To be the right fit
Against his soft cheek.
I was a father
Once upon a time
But now example
Has grown aged grey.
May he remember
With a churlish smile
How we together
Invented new words,
How I hugged him tight
Within love's balnket
Just because we were.
When I am long gone
I hope he remembers
And has the golden
Chance to pass it on.

Quiet Morning

By

Michael Escoubas

Pontiac, Illinois

Day dawns soft as cotton.
The world is hushed.
Softly the wind

caresses the upturned face
of a child finding reassurance
in the smile and gentle clasp
of his grandfather's hand holding his.



James Paradiso, Photographer

The Jeweled Chest

By

Judith Bernstein

Highland Park, Illinois

My sister and I
long stared up
at the bejeweled chest
on top of Nanny's
high carved mantle.

Charming little box
covered in filigree,
flickering gems
reflecting afternoon sun.

"What's in it?What's in it?"
We asked each other.
Many an hour
we pondered on
the treasure it must contain.

One rainy afternoon
She and I could
refrain no longer.
We pushed the ottoman
to the hearth
and lifted down the chest.

We had just unhooked
the tiny clasp
when Nanny walked in.
"I see you are seeking my
grandfather's treasure."

Lifting the lid
We saw the golden box
was filled with
nothing but dust.

A brass plaque
inside the lid read:
Sally Ann Goodman
Born: July 18, 1914
Died: January 12, 1919
Our treasure stolen
by the Spanish Flu.

Great, Great, Great,
Great Grandfather Who?

By

Curt Vevang

*"The number of ancestors
that each of us has extends
exponentially back in
time. Looking back less
than two hundred years
at a moment in time, six
generations ago, we each
had 64 great, great, great,
great grandparents."*

Sixty-four people, a slice from my past.
Sixty-four people from whence I was cast.
Because of these folks I look as I do.
My strengths and my faults are impacted too.
They affect my health, the shape of my face,
they provide my genes, determine my race.
I know so little of their lives it's true,
but then about me - they hadn't a clue.
Can you imagine their utter dismay
if they were to see how I live today?
How great it would be to gather them all,
to hear their stories, their hopes and their call.
From Europe, Asia or some other place,
who knows who they were or even their race.
Some may have been rich or worked in the trades,
horse thieves, soldiers or pretty bar maids.
Did they consider their tree's future fate
while they were working or choosing a mate
that someone like me would end up to be
a distant grandchild and their progeny?
Amusing just how they impact my day,
those sixty-four folks with my DNA.



Young Rosalie, Jill Charles' grandmother

When My
Grandmother Was
Young

By
Jill Charles

Chicago, Illinois

When Rosalie was young
She rode horses
In humid Indiana fields.

Watched Errol Flynn
With her sister Frances
When cinema cost ten cents.

Rosalie learned shorthand
Quietly filing and typing
Her red heels tapping
Under the office desk
Eager to dance that night.

She met her husband
At a dance
Introduced herself
Unafraid of a stranger
In army khakis.

Fifty years later
He still gave her gardenias.

Grandma's House

By

Gail Denham

Sun River, Oregon

There was always this musty "used" smell. Years later I walked into Mom's house and it was there. Now I wonder if our house has absorbed this aroma.

It's the years that sit on shelves and whisper into the air; the same old recipes, cooked bacon, but the pans have grown tired and scarred.

Ointment to stave off the rheumatics, musty journals, noisy with memories, your mom's favorite coat which you can't bear to give away, the grandchildren's toy box.

A shirt our Mitch wore, even to bed, when he was six. Another shirt labeled "Cabbie" that our Matt had from his high school play, a quilt Grandma made from worn-out wool suits.

Sounds are there, exuding their own aura. Laughing till we collapsed in goofiness, teens' noisy sneakers on stairs, and the cat cart-wheeling through Ellen's window one night.

The shelves, chairs, dressers all send up their scents and messages. Soft comfort wraps you in handmade fuzzy crochet, while you rest in your creaky wood rocker.

You curl up, dream awhile, sniff, revel in whispers, smells, seeing past faded wallpaper and scruffy door frames. You wish it wouldn't fade away - ever.

Making Peanut Butter Cookies

By Charlie F. G.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

Making peanut butter cookies.

Push it with a fork.

Wait one hour.

Climbing on the tree.

Toni falls off.

Twenty-five thousand

bandaids later

he's healed.

They're finished!

We rush to the kitchen

eating as many

cookies as we can.

My Grandma

By Molly P.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

I call her Nana

She is an artist

My grandma is fun.

She has

Tea parties with me

She is

So active

I love her a lot.

Grandma's Slippers

By

Sharon F. Warner

Chicago, Illinois

I walk in Grandma's slippers

And I try to fill her shoes,

By the helpfulness I offer

And the kind words that I use.

I'm wrapped in Grandma's housecoat

As I once was in her love.

I still feel that love protect me

Like a warm-lined leather glove.

She thought always of her family,

So I think now more of mine.

On the face of Grandma's watch I

Read the preciousness of time.

She didn't leave me money

I could spend, be robbed of, lose;

But I walk in Grandma's slippers,

And I try to fill her shoes.



William Hicks, Photographer

Paint Smears

By

Candace Kubinec

*Greensburg,
Pennsylvania*

He had the soul of an artist with dreams of becoming an illustrator. A home study course was to be his escape from a mundane life. He never completed it. Operating an overhead crane in a steel mill, where the heat and noise from the gritty floor below rose up to sap his spirit, didn't leave time for art. As sandy hair turned silver the books were forgotten - stashed in the bottom drawer of his dresser. Creativity was not stifled - it spilled out onto the kitchen floor that he covered in green, yellow, orange and red triangles and squares when grandmother was away, and the clapboard siding of his two-story house painted in unconventional pink and gray. But my favorite works were the abstract smears and slashes of a determined muse on the rough, gray cement block walls in the cellar where he cleaned his brushes.

Grandparents

By Eli D.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

The ones who raised my mom and dad,
the ones who do not get mad,
the one who has mastered chess,
the ones who need a bit of rest.

The Gramp who is too happy,
the Gram who makes good cookies,
The one who lives across the country,
The one who has a huge family.

The one who hugs me everytime.

Grandma's

By

Judith Tullis

*Indian Head Park,
Illinois*

Nineteen-fifty
west side street
summer Sunday
families meet
Grandma's house
long bus ride
fifteen grandkids
source of pride
little brother's
runny nose
Tom, Dick, Joey
come to blows
jugs of coffee
chocolate cake
Uncle Harvey's
teeth are fake
Father Murphy

straight from Mass
offered whiskey
says he'll pass
cousin Patty
pigtails tight
plays piano
old upright
Aunt Loretta
starts to cry
Mama tells me
say goodbye
call your father
grab your stuff
visit's over
enough's enough.

Grandparents

By Nate M.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

Grandma and Grandpa
they live in Connecticut
the own a shoe store

My Grandparents

By Syler L.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

My Grandparents Are
Nice, Caring, Helping, Giving, Happy,
Have Lots of Memories



James Paradiso, Photographer

Arrival

By

Marjorie Rissman

Highland Park, Illinois

*From The Fanny Stories:
A Collection of Poems
Dedicated to My
Grandmother, Fanny
Kassof*

She came at sixteen
alone on a big boat
gold coins sewed inside
the hem of her skirt
from Europe to Ellis Island
almost an unbearable month
shuttered inside a stateroom
where food was left at her door
like a prisoner or a family's pet dog
left scraps in a bowl on the porch.

Sometimes she snuck on deck
when darkness protected her
the hood on her cloak obscuring
her delight in breathing the fresh
sea air laden with salt like her tears
of loneliness and fright
all too quickly she returned
to the relative safety down below.

At long last a symphony of fog horns
announced New York Harbor and
the boat became a beehive of activity
passengers gathered up their bundles
headed up the stairs to await the vision
of the Great Lady in the water
their first welcome to America
She was a grand sight filled with
promise and dignity
kindness and compassion.
The Mother she had left behind.

Seaworthy

By

Tom Roby

Chicago, Illinois

Grandfather Eldridge never weighed anchor. He had to wear thick lenses to see the Great War in newsprint. His cunning lay in his hearing. He could hit on the crack in the ship's side before it appeared.

For fifty years his small silver hammer told him which vessels could sail, when they would leave port. He had nowhere to go for vacations. Summer and winter he used his own ladders, turned a deaf ear to captains eager to slip him aged Scotch whiskies, Persian rugs, or a talking parrot.



James Paradiso, Photographer

I could never pick out which of those echoing intervals told him what to report. I only knew, as I leaned out the car window to follow his climb up the vast chime of the hull, he was the shipyard captain, I was his crew. Later on, we went to the local saloon where he bought me a Pepsi, downed a half bottle of bar scotch.

The ship they sent out after he said No, sank in a calm sea. The investigation took twenty years. He told company agents, who offered him Glenlivet, dancing girls to change his tune at the hearing, he had sold his hammer to shore up his retirement.

Once he had thought he might sail, pack his bag, walk out to meet his secretary at the wharf, but on the front porch of his home the hammer must have hit something not quite right, so he turned back to his dry dock.

Archeology of Desire

By

Mary Jo Balistreri

Wisconsin

*Published in her
collection, gathering
the harvest*

Steam curls its way up the spout,
unfurls petals of mist that displace
the winter of a cold kitchen.
My grandma cups her hands around
the blue-willow cup, its glaze
cracked and veined. She lowers
her face to the heat, takes a sip
and rests her head against the back
of the rocker, the hiss of wet wood,
our background music. Soon
the stories spin from her mouth,
worn from telling, smooth
as softest flannel. How they tint
the bleak day in warm pastels.
She guides me through the prairies
of youth, the furrowed ground
of growing old, of births and deaths
of children and husband, crocheting
the past with mauve shadows laid
against the gray simplicity
of the North Dakota Plainses.

Grandmother's Rocker

By

Richard Shaw

Lisle, Illinois

Sitting in the corner of her kitchen was the black rocker
Its arms worn bare of black paint
It creaked and groaned as she rocked
Her gnarled hands wrapped around the curled arms
Sitting there in the early morning feeling the sun
As it filled in the empty spaces within the kitchen
Some morning lost in her thoughts
She just sat there starrng off to some other place
Other mornings in her black rocker
She rocked back and forth with an easy rhythm
Her kitchen filled with the aroma of her early work
A fresh apple or blueberry pie greeted us

Some mornings, the sun could not warm the kitchen
The smell of fresh pies did not greet my brother
and me
The creaking and groaning of grandmother's black rocker
Filled the early morning air
Grandmother rocked back and forth with fury
Her steel gray eyes seeing something we could not
The old black rocker mirroring her fury
As it inched across the kitchen floor
My brother and I knew there would be no pies
To greet us this morning



James Paradiso, Photographer

Honey and Cream Queen

By

Ina G. Perlmutter

Northbrook, Illinois

I loved my grandmother to a fault
of course she hadn't any
well, maybe there were one or two
certainly not many
her disposition serene
complexion honey and cream
serene, honey and cream, a queen
gramps called her Rochel
friends called her Rosie
her given name was Rachel
a kind and gentle lady

Momma Cora

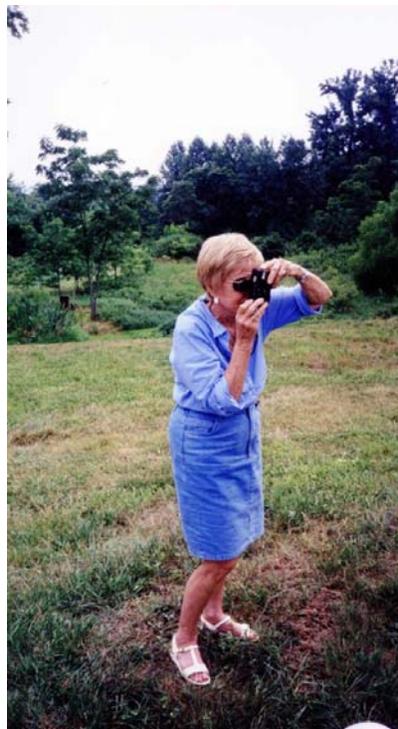
By
Myron L. Stokes

Oak Park, Illinois

Wide, big boned, and cushy like a pillow.
Cinnamon cheeks smooth as pudding, soft as suede,
and a silver braid dangled down her back.
Her rough, man-working hands cupped my face,
stroked my back, and held me close.
Killed and cleaned a hog as mercilessly as a man,
banged a tambourine on Sunday morning.
Knocked a bull between the eyes with a sledge hammer
and had the meat hung up to chill before nightfall.

Filled her bottom lip with checkerberry snuff
and picked her teeth with birch.
Moved through her fields sowing seeds,
her feet shod in brogan shoes.
Followed the plow, bent to toil,
touched earth and glorious grain grew.
Tended her fertile garden crammed with little shoots,
and kept her pantry stacked with Mason Jars
packed with sweet, sticky fruit.

Smelled of lye soap, onions, and red clay,
but on Sunday mornings—Chanel, Jergens, and gardenia talc.
Her elegant Sunday hats graced her head like diadems.
Regal under the brassy Mississippi sun,
surrounded by her orange roses and saucer-head dahlias.
Pearl-clasped white gloves covered her strong, sturdy hands.
Big square pocketbook, tortoise-shell handle umbrella,
and armed with the Word of God.



Grandma Kuhn's
Plumcake

By

Joseph Kuhn Carey

Glencoe, Illinois

Grandma Kuhn made the
best plum cake in the world,
so good, so sweet, so
beautiful to behold
with all of those baked plum slices
on top in neatly-ordered rows,
sometimes I thought
mouths were watering
even in galaxies & worlds
far away.

If only I could open the door
to her kitchen once again
and smell that sweet plum
scent and see her smiling by the
oven with a wooden spoon in
hand, I'd know that the world
was safe and made to stay,
good down to the very last
luxurious, lingering bite.

Haunted

By

Ann Cefola

Scarsdale, New York

Float down stairs.
My open palm grazes banister. First
floor. Grandfather Julius stares
an oil brown-coated his turn-of-the century gaze
I walk through Lovrien Isadora Ike
to opened kitchen window
wind rolls down gray road, lifts silver oaks, sprays my
lashes.
I tilt one ear. Another wave. *Yes? What else?*
Conches. Starfish. One black pearl.
Hmm. Turning, I part
the darkness with my arms,
toes splay on each carpeted step.
Now I know what I don't know. Night
having blown imperatives from my head,
I open closed doors. Ancestors wring paper hands,
pray my restless spirit goes back to bed.



Donna L. Ritter's Grandma Koehler

Sarah Dubin

By

Deborah Rosen

Glencoe, Illinois

Mother gave me Jensen,
mother-in-law Black Knight Bavarian china
but it was great-grandmother Sarah's
blue mottled metal bowl
that had somehow wended
its way to me that I treasure.

Great grandmother, born when Lincoln
was president, had carried that
bowl
from the Ukraine. Traveling half a world
to that cracked Liberty Bell in Philadelphia,
it spoke of Tsars and suffering, her father
a poor wagon maker, of delivering my
grandmother in a field, having her son
sent to Byberry, a mental institution, a baby
girl die of sudden infant death syndrome
though she believed she had smothered it
in her sleep.

If I could not speak Sarah's language, her
metal bowl still whispers her story to me.

Grandparents

By Rosella I.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

My Grandparents are old
They look like gold
I want to meet them
I want to greet them
They read with me
They'll lead with me
They are so wise
They touch the skies

Grandfather

By Mia N.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

Tall, Short
My Grandfather
I Don't See Him A Lot
I Wish That I Could Do More Stuff
With Him.

Grandfather and Grandmother O'Neil

By

Jenene Ravesloot

Chicago, Illinois

After "The Great Hunger," Grandfather O'Neil was part of the Irish diaspora. Family legend has it that he left Ireland, moved to Australia, made his fortune in Australian Merino sheep, immigrated to America before he married, then began to raise a family. His sisters followed, moving next door to him.

I remember my three aunts reminiscing about the old country as they sat in the kitchen staring at the spicy tea leaves swimming in imported Belleek china teacups while Grandmother hand-embroidered flowers on bleached Irish linen.

When Grandmother and Grandfather died, the eldest boy, Uncle Billy and his wife, Aunt Doris, inherited the house and all the furnishings.

Before they moved in, they sold the midnight-blue plush velvet couch, 1930's Art Deco period cocktail coffee table with the cobalt blue glass mirror top and hidden bar, oversized dining table and matching chairs, bedroom furniture, imported Irish china, glassware, the elaborate crèche that used to sit under the Christmas tree, bubble lights, tree ornaments, even Grandmother's crocheted doily armrests. "So out-of-date," Aunt Doris said.

Grandpa's Christmas Tree

By

Mark Hudson

Evanston, Illinois

There is a story in my family about my grandfather. He was a jolly good fellow who wouldn't do bad things. But one Christmas, he wanted to chop down a tree. My grandmother taught the girl scouts, and they had a section of property that had some trees. My grandfather cut down a tree that he thought was on their property, but it turned out it happened to be someone else's property. Those people reported this to the police. The police came, but it was a misunderstanding. The next day, on the way to church, they were reading the story on the front page of the paper in this small town. When my grandfather went to work on Monday, he was receiving crank calls at work where people would call and shout, "Timber!" and hang up. And it's a family story that still gets retold sometimes around Christmas, in memory of my grandpa.



Anne S. Bell aka Bandy

My Grandfather

By Sean K.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

My grandfather is really cool
He does very cool things with me
I like it when we go on cool trips
It's fun when we even go to the pool.

My Grandma

By Colin H.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

She is very nice
baking goodies here and there
I love my grandma.

Oh my grandfather he's quite a good one
We do many cool things together
From fishing to building Legos
Oh my grandfather he is so fun.

To the Grandmothers

By

Helen Degen Cohen

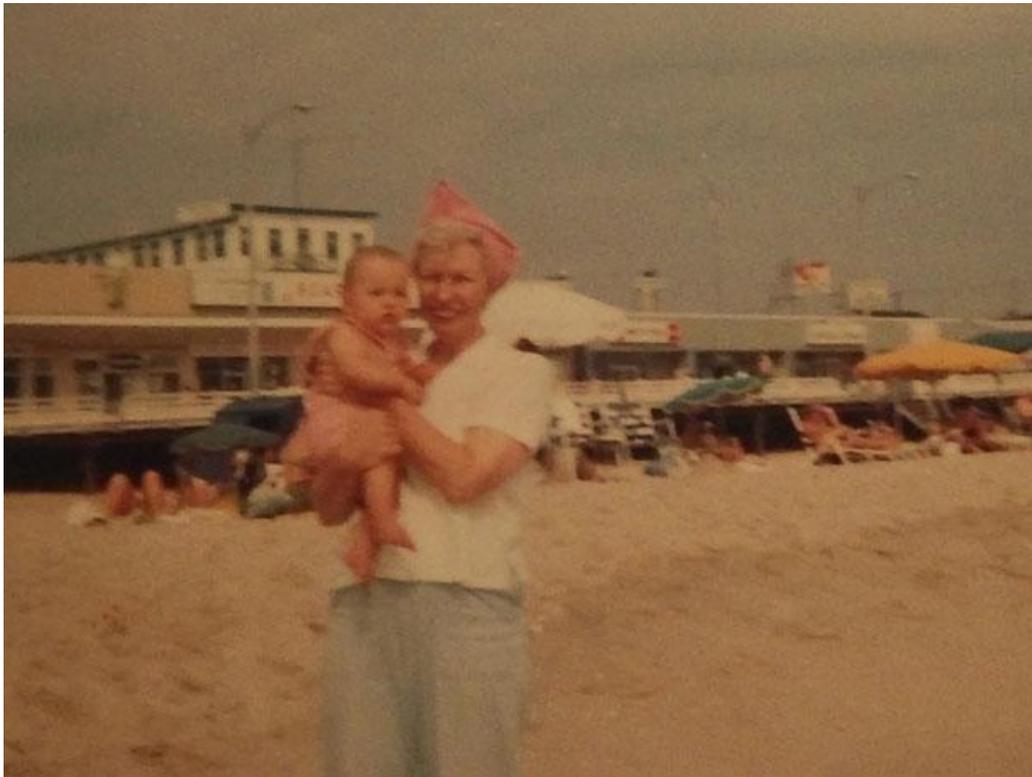
Deerfield, Illinois

Sometimes you are not in heaven but
Descended into a hollow close to me and
I'd like to touch you, quiet Dora, serious Dora
With your sunken eyes, who cooked for the rich,
The beggars and misfits, and all those children
(*They tell me*) and still holds up (*in this portrait of
Mists*) this handsome, somewhat befogged mate.
I can feel your pearls, his Sabbath suit.

Yet given this velvet mythos between us,
These negatives growing in my head, O God,
Whose laughter is this, whose song of praise, yours
Or Regina's, as if I could be reflected in your eyes?

Handsome Regina, in your cold-water flat, was it
Really my father your son (*the braggart*) who was
Best at feeding five idle men? Warsaw Regina,
Washing, sweeping, smuggling saccharin across
The lakes for bread, buxom Regina, when your
Awesome breasts fell out one day and this child
Stepped back terrified, did you laugh, Grandmother,
Did you laugh? There is sweetness in the world,
Some said, and your milk, I hear, was sweet, despite
Your smart orders, and my father (*the tyrant*)
It seems, who was the fool who fed the wise.

I'd like just one more candle in our hollow, Regina,
By which we might further reveal ourselves, since
I've brought Dora along to this tabletop of all things
Sepia. Was it just this Russian tea that wafts in search of
Cousins and friends, or is it the arch of your hands, your
Four living hands reaching? It is I, the smallest, who asks
In the darkness that took you when I was five.



Ocean City, Maryland

Wanted

By

Marcia R. Goldberg

Montreal, Quebec

Grandfather's shop huddled in bricks
except where the lathe was;
there he had boards cut into curls
(I never saw the inside part;
it was the cold front porch on the house I recall
where Grandma draped covers on chairs)
where Grandpa presented his hollowed out salad bowls,
little pumps that were lamps and nutcracker bowls
that fit together like jigsaw puzzles for passers by:
hundreds of his own inventions
like rockers my grandma covered with cushions,
blocks for tots and toys a child could pull, doll house
furniture
with dressers and chairs, bunk beds and breakfast nooks.
Now in my thirty-first year I have a shop too in my home,
finished products out for inspection: mirrors
with miniature Play-dough trains in their frames,
ornaments to hang on mobiles, alphabet blocks
like Grandpa's but flatter, clocks with woven dough faces
and bakers on barn boards like Sendak's *Night
Kitchen* figures,
candles and candelabras packed up in baskets and boxes
awaiting as much as my grandfather's wares
a buyer, a beggar, a user who cares.

Grandparents

By Aron A.

Mrs. Leven's ELA Class, Indian Trail School

My grandparents are very nice and quiet,
none of them has an important diet.

One grandma is very dancy,
and another is a bit fancy.

One grandpa says, "You Bum!"
and neither chews pink gum.

Now since we're all done,
let's go play and have some fun!

Iris' Pantoum

By

Jennifer Dotson

Highland Park, Illinois

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2009). Also included in Clever
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Press).*

A gift of wisdom is my deepest hope,
May my children learn from my narration.
For the mountain's top we all must grope.
My life story is a useful illustration.

Will my children learn from my narration?
Will they see the peak and not the slope?
My life story is a colorful illustration -
love is the safety harness and the rope.

Focus on the peak and not the slope.
Dwell upon the joy and the elation.
Love is the safety harness and the rope
keeping us aloft for the duration.

Dwell upon the joy and the elation.
A simple faith helps us cope,
keeping us aloft for the duration.
Awareness goes beyond the envelope.

Our simple faith helps us cope
filling each moment with celebration.
Awareness breaks through the envelope
and brings us to our desired destination.

Live each moment in celebration
while the mountaintop we all must grope.
We will arrive at our desired destination.
A gift of wisdom is my deepest hope.



Iris Ingram