

The cancer was not quick by any means, but it was sudden for us, so there was work to be done. Still, I found it odd how my family interacted around me once we knew of the coming death. Their subtle changes in conversation, the topics avoided, made me feel like the illness affecting my grandfather had stolen their air too. More than once I would enter a room to stifled murmurs of his name, causing me to wonder if they thought I did not know what was happening to him. I have never been one to pull voices out of others, so instead of using speech for a resolution, I would make my peace with the stifling atmosphere and walk out the door.

I began leaving whenever possible, partly not to be a burden of unwanted interaction, partly to explore the shoreline and whatever ocean aliens were to be found on it. Usually on my outings I would be accompanied by a sketchbook and some pencils. I had always loved to sketch; in fact, I cannot remember a time in my life without someone commenting on my artistic ability, but I never really saw it as anything with purpose, just another way to pass the time. Rapidly over the few weeks I spent living on the coast my hobby of drawing was amplified. Perhaps it was because I felt isolated, perhaps because I had wanted to give my grandfather a filled sketchbook before he died or simply there was nothing else for me to communicate through, but I began drawing every moment I was near the shore. At the time I was unsure why it captivated me so much, so I began sketching and falling for every misshapen, algae crusted pebble I could find.

It was 4 A.M. when I woke up to the sun and to the precipitated awakening of my future, fluent in a visual dialect as an artist. I knew if I left the house fast enough the tide would still be fully out, a sight I could not wait to witness, and it proved to be worth the early wake up. To this day, I have never experienced a place so intimately or been more awestruck by my surroundings. It was like the sea was breathing with each tidal ebb and flow: if the ocean had lungs, they were filling with air. It was here I experienced one of the most happily melancholic premonitions in my life. Everything here leaked life and I began thinking the ground had pores which were in a constant state of cold sweats. No wonder the ocean is called a body of water. I learned to love the salt water, even though it could give a breeze the ability to rip you down to your skeleton in seconds. I never feel more alive, then in the presence of the Pacific. Here the earth sweats and breathes heavy, here it is active. To everyone else, it is infinitesimal and insignificant, a moment a child was looking over tidal pools at 4 A.M. in the middle of May; however, for me, it will always be one of my everything moments, when I realised that movement, the feeling, sound, air, and sense of a place could be my medium of communication. the epiphany hit me as if the ocean was sending love notes.

I was subconsciously falling in love with the landscape of life, while trying to escape the bitter stench of death that was lingering in my life. I had been trying to capture some of the world's immortality with a pencil. Even though I had no voice, no one to talk to, I had life communicate to me via landscape. I have always been called an artist, but I think in that brief moment I became one. Now I know the sea has a heartbeat, how lucky am I to be able to sense it.