I Always Miss You

by Hongyu Dong

The most important thing that ran through my childhood is 'missing.' I missed my parents when they went to work; I missed my friends when I graduated from that school; I missed my girlfriend when I felt lonely; I missed my grandma when we were about to leave her house, and I missed my grandpa the most when I realized that I lost him. Some of those 'misses' could have been a response, but most of them could not. I know people always said that parting is the norm of life. There is also a saying in ancient China that goes 'all good things must come to an end,' and I never felt like I was the exception. So I started to think about what is the best way that could let me bear all those emotions. Missing is an emotion that arises from our hearts, representing our true thoughts. Every person has their own opinions and aspects toward this emotion. Some hide it deep inside their hearts, some speak it out to the person they miss, some do actual behavior when they miss somebody, but for me, it was a thing that always changed during a long period of time, and might settle down now.

I started to miss my parents at the first moment when I realized they were the people who really loved me. They had to leave home during the daytime for their work, so every time I saw them coming back, it was going to be the best moment in my day. When I was one year old, my father was in the critical period of his career life, same as my mother, so what I knew is when I was dropped off at my aunt’s house, they left. I love both two of my aunt and I really miss the time I spend with them in my childhood, but I miss my mom and dad the most. Because I cannot

make phone calls with them, the only consolation for me is going to be a picture of their wedding photo that I found in my aunt's house. I took it carefully from the top of the closet and hid it under my pillow. Every time I miss them so much at night, I take it out and hug them inside my chest, just as they are hugging me like what they did before. Those days without them were hard, but after several days, I was used to this situation, and I did spend a great time with my aunts, but I still cannot hold my emotion at night, which is the time I miss them the most. When I look back to the experience at that time, I was pretty grateful because it does let me realize that my parent would not follow me through my whole life, so I need to step out from their protection and try to do something independently. But also, it let me figure out that family is the most important thing that needs me to be cherished and guarded.

When I stepped into primary school, because my mother found a primary school with more opportunities and better education resources, we left from grandma's house and moved into a new region in Beijing. At that time, I felt this emotion again, but this time it was to my grandma's. If someone asks me if I can use a word to describe those days, I would probably say, I feel lonely. We always arrived at the front door of grandma's house at 11 a.m, I would always see my grandpa stand outside the door, holding his hand back and watching our car. I always start yelling at him before our car gets near by, I think that's the time my sentiment of missing occurred the most. The day I spend there will always be my wonderful days ever, and therefore, the time after dinner, which when we're about to leave, is my saddest time in those days. I would change the direction that I waved my hand and say good back twice or even three times to everyone that makes sure I didn't forget anyone. At that time, the emotion named 'missing' arose from the deep of my heart. Just like a burning fire that cannot be extinguished, but the things that I could only do is to suppress it again into my heart and face reality again from sweet dream. I

clearly knew that if I still fall into that pleasure dream, I would be afraid to do anything in reality, so I learned how to suppress my real emotion and tried to forget them until the ship that carried my emotion found a harbor to rest in.

I met her at the skateboarding club that created, and gave lectures toward our club member and taught long plate skills to those who play this kind of skateboard. She was one of them. We practiced together and that's where love begins. We are not the couple that attracted by fresh, but attracted by our soul resonance. We spent a lovely time together. But when I got the offer from the University of Pittsburgh, I began to worry about the upcoming exotic relationship we would face. It was still a raining day, same place and same umbrella with the day I confessed to her, but the differences are our emotions. She was pretty calm but I cannot hold myself anymore. It was the first time that she saw tears running down from my eyes, and she hugged me as the way I hugged her before, saying nothing but it was like we talked more than a thousand words. I understand another physical expression when I miss someone. There is a saying in ancient China that goes 'One day apart seems three autumns past,' not even to mention that our exotic relationship would be measured using year. After I start my college life, 'missing' starts to grow inside my heart, but this time, I could speak out of my emotion to her because she is the one who could deal with it, understand me, and told me that I'm not alone. My dictionary of life added a new sentence, which is 'Confide in somebody.'

It's autumn again, it seems as if all thoughts are carried by this season, letters and tears been sent to the one who is missed. My grandpa was a pretty weird guy, he had a much better relationship with me than he did with all his children. Whenever we came back home to visit him, the moment he saw me, he would always come up to me and talk to me. He would ask me how I was doing, how my studies were going, and whether I was having a good time every day,

as if I was the one he thought about the most in this world. I think this is the power of miss expressed by elders. But god always likes to play jokes, just as I got the my college offer and started to prepare for the biggest party I've ever hosted in my life, I received a message from my mom. Mom said that Grandpa had fallen and was not doing well, and Dad had already been on his way home. When I received the message, I suddenly felt a tugging in my heart, but at the same time, I prayed that my grandfather would be fine. The night before the party was about to begin, I received a call from my grandfather, who said he had heard from my father that my party host would be broadcast on TV and promised to watch my hosting and take a good look at his eldest grandson's growth over the past 18 years. The party went on as planned, and I gave my best performance, thinking that if only my grandfather could see me hosting, he would be very relieved. But it was not to be. When I was lying on my bed in the school dormitory, I sent a message to my mom, only to find out that my grandfather had died of a sudden cerebral hemorrhage half an hour before the start of my hosting session. I froze, but I didn't cry, there was just peace, then miss. According to the custom of our hometown, we had to have a three-day wake and held the funeral on the fourth day. During these three days, I didn't close my eyes, but stayed at my grandfather's wake, doing my best to be by his side in his last hours. I wrote my grandfather's eulogy by hand and read it out in its entirety at the funeral, so maybe this could be a way for him to see me grow up. Because I had to go back to school, I boarded the train back to Beijing the day after the funeral. But as the train was leaving, my aunts, who had come to see us off, handed me a note saying that it was the only piece of paper with writing on it that they had found when they were cleaning up Grandpa's house. I opened it after I had prepared myself mentally, and what came into my eyes was his unique and somewhat twisted handwriting. Although it was a little hard to read, I could clearly see that my name and date of birth were

written all over it, and I couldn't imagine how my grandfather, who didn't know how to write, practiced over and over again to be able to write my name and my birthday when it was obvious that he didn't know how to write anyone's name. Self-recrimination and sadness filled my heart; at this point, I could no longer suppress my emotions, and lost my voice on the high-speed train and cried. The grandfather who would buy two big bags of snacks every time before we went home, who would ask me many things every time, who loved me so much, would never come back. I won't hear his voice, I won't have him in my life anymore. I feel so guilty, guilty that I didn't let him experience my love for him in the last moments of his life, that I didn't let him see me grow up through my party hosting, and that I didn't experience so, so many emotions for him, at last, all emotion transfers into missing.

In life, regret is probably the main theme; I also realize that to look up and forward and live a good life in the future is the best love expression for my grandfather. I don’t want to control my emotions at this time, at the kind of event like this. I recognize that missing is unavoidable. People always said, the death of a family member is not like a storm that sweeps through our heart, but a lifetime of dampness. I didn’t cry when I knew he passed away, I didn’t cry when I saw him inside the tomb but I cried when I saw his love for me, I know at that time, I missed him the most. (我想你了，爷爷)

I learned a lot from all my life experiences. I know for others who are not related to me, I will maintain respect and kindness, even though I will not invest any extra emotion in them. But for the people I care about and those who love me, I won't try to suppress or forget the feeling of how much I miss them because that's the most important thing I should cherish and protect as a human being. The most important thing that makes us human is that we have feelings. We know

how to give back; we know how to have compassion for others, and we also know to miss those who mean the most to you.