

Thang Lian

Age: 18, Grade: 12

School Name: East Kentwood High School, Kentwood, MI

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Category: Poetry

A Call Home

vi. My son, how are you doing?

Months after arriving
in the United States,
Grandma's voice
echoes through
our home phone.
Aged,

Grandma's voice
is huskier,
throatier,
and tinged with
the slightest hint
of tears.

I'm okay.

*My son,
when will you come home?*

I don't know.

I try to swallow
the emotions inside,
but little by little,
through the cracks they pass by.

Grandma croons
of old days gone by,
and I can't but reminisce
and begin to miss
of our old days,
spent together in bliss.

Do you remember,
she starts,
chuckling before
even beginning the story.

Yes, Grandma, I remember.

Silence. Stifled tears.

*Call me every night,
and don't forget to pray.
Listen to your Mom and Dad,
for they know what is best.
And eat your vegetables,
and don't go to bed too late.
And... and...*

Crying.

*Remember me!
Remember your family!*

The tears
pour down
like waterfalls,
they cascade down.

*Grandma!
How could I forget?
You or my cousins!
Don't be ridiculous...
I will never forget!*

My voice breaks
like dry twigs in Autumn,
and Grandma sniffles,
letting the silence speak
what words cannot.

I love you, my son.

*I love you too, Grandma,
I love you too.*

Silence...

*Grandma, I will come back.
One day I'll come back home.*

*My son, I will be waiting.
And I will pray to God
to let me live a little longer
until you and I can climb
the mountains together.
Until I can give you
sugary sweets
and savory meats.
Until then, my son,
I will keep waiting*