

“25th Hour” (Slam Edit)

Dedicated to Grandma (R.I.P.)

Just think...

If you had even one more hour in every day,
How would you spend the time?

See a while back my mind would have drifted
To Eastern Standard Time shifting
When spirits are lifted by extra party time
That gets wasted by students anyway
When spirits are lifted in cocktail form
In after-hour soirees,
Or my eyes would have focused on set back clocks
That set up an extra hour of sleep
That's squandered in the end
By sidetracking diversions and confusions
That confound already complicated schoolwork situations
That prompted the hopes of more rest to begin with.

But then again, we've asked questions like this before,
That become nothing more than
Empty rhetorical queries taking on little meaning
Until missing answers get answered by missing loved ones
Who leave voids that aren't easily filled
By the passage of a few extra moments.

And see, this is where the plot gets a bit realer,
Because previously for me poetry portrayed
A world of could be-s and what ifs
That may or may not have always connected to collected audiences
And so if change can be spared,
Then in my time I'm obliged to share the story of my grandmother,
For myself or anyone who has ever grieved and learned life lessons.
And so with her blessing I'll create this 25th hour
As an expression to relate the impression she left on me.

See, you learn the value of home and family
From someone who happily showed me love
Even though we couldn't communicate perfectly.
The harmony of our endearment transcended
My ability to speak my native tongue and her grasp of English,
Because she still understood "I love you"
And that's all that mattered, that I loved her as well.

And you learn the value of being a warrior
When you see someone try to fight cancer
And triumph once only to be tested a second time.
See, diseases can be easily deciphered and appear easy to explain
Until the logic hits home and you see her battle lymphoma,

A struggle for spelling bee competitors
So you can only imagine when noun becomes verb
And again when benign states mutate to malignant fates.
And all the while you know you can't curse medical science
When your dad is a doctor...
So you just end up cursing your luck.

And so you learn the value of faith and determination,
Traits she inarguably translated onto my dad,
Who has overcome his own struggles but still managed
To teach again the value of courage
When he stood as a father who with tears in his eyes
Watching his own mother die,
Could still turn to his kids and tell them that everything would be all right.

And so, I've learned
That it's only right to share what they've given to me,
Made me who I've striven to be
Made me appreciate what's God-given to me.

And you reflect on how with a few more minutes
You could have had the chance to say
That you loved her just one more time...
And so you realize that even though we can't always change
The amount of time in a day or on Earth,
We must learn how to value it all the same,
And remember to cherish what we have left with those we truly care for.