

The Time to Grow is Now

2020 was a year that started with a struggle. On December 6th, 2019, my childhood best friend, Collin, died from a drug overdose. He was the first person that was my friend in this world. 3 days before my 21st birthday, he was gone. I have never grieved a person like this in my life. The pain stuck with me like nothing I had experienced. No matter where I was or what I was doing, I could only think of Collin. In February, right before everything shut down, my friend Jeff and I went to New York City. On Collin's birthday, we went to a drag show, and I could feel the world breaking under my feet knowing he couldn't be there. During quarantine, he was always on my mind. I was stuck in a house with 4 other 21-year-olds for months on end. It was suffocating. Processing trauma and grief in a world without distractions as been one of the hardest challenges of my life. I recently moved back to my hometown where I am surrounded by memories of Collin and other past traumas. It is especially difficult to process traumas in a new place during a pandemic. A hug has never felt so cherished. Community has never felt closer but also so far apart. I am grateful for the friends I see and people I am close to in a new way. While the world can feel like its crumbling, there is always a smile to be had. I can now smile when I pass places I went with Collin as a kid. The world slowing down has made sit with these feelings in a way I never could before. I had so much time to feel everything. Collin's name makes me smile and I feel so blessed to have known him. COVID made my world slow down enough to get through this loss.