

Lana Kishk

### *Goodbye Grandma*

When I think of the Covid-19 pandemic, I think of Grandma Esther who had to die alone. I know she never envisioned leaving the world this way. She assumed, like every other mother, grandmother and friend that she would be surrounded by loved ones to the end, saying her last goodbyes and passing peacefully into the unknown. Instead, the coronavirus robbed her of the chance for human contact with her family. She was isolated in a hospital room for six weeks, lonely and unaccompanied.

On March 16th 2020, my grandma left her home for the last time escorted to the hospital by dedicated paramedics, her body besieged by the fever and cough caused by the coronavirus in her lungs. We had no way of knowing at the time that we were saying our goodbyes; but after she left us that day, we were prohibited from visiting with her. From then on, her constant caregivers, doctors, nurses, paramedics, EMTs, and first responders became her immediate family, caring for her round the clock the way we would have, given the chance.

It frightened me to think of other patients in the same position. I knew the hospital rooms were full of patients like this and that she wasn't the only one. Each hospital was packed to its maximum capacity holding thousands of suffering patients all alone without a friendly face to care for them.

Our life was a rollercoaster. My dad, a certified EMT, felt helpless as they wouldn't even allow him in the hospital. He would stand outside and beg for word from them. He just wanted to check on his mom and see how she was. What if she needed a cup of water, a pair of socks, and a phone charger. What if she was freezing? We would go days without a word from a doctor. The uncertainty was unbearable and the helplessness was eating us away. One second we'd be told she'd be home next week, and another doctor would be telling us there won't be a tomorrow. We were left alone jumping at every ring of the phone hoping for some kind of information that would ease our fears.

The final fatal call from the doctor informing us of her sudden death will forever be etched in my mind. It's going to be a haunting memory of mine that I'll remember forever. While I know my grandmother left the world knowing she was loved and cherished by so many people, it still hurts to think about it. She left the world knowing that if they could, every one of her beloved family members would have been by her side. Quarantined at home, It hurt me tremendously to see each

of her children mourn the loss of their mother alone. More than ever, all they wanted was to gather and mourn together. However, they were forced to remain isolated and receive condolences from their friends via zoom or skype. This was not the way it was supposed to be. We never got to say goodbye to grandma, and we are devastated by the thought of never being able to say goodbye to a woman we've loved every day, but that's the toll this horrible virus enacted.