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Grandpa's Cookies

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Mikhayla Dunaj

Superglued into a makeshift scrapbook
I found her
in her elegant white dress,
at least I think it was white.
I have only ever seen her
in black
and white.
She holds a canned drink.
My grandfather
ignores the camera
to adore his new wife
and a smile that survived two generations
making its way
down
to
me.

I take my eyes off of her—
something I’ve been told
people could hardly do—
and glance at my grandpa,
his hair thick,
and slicked back.

He doesn’t know
that she’ll be diagnosed
at 44 with
Melanoma.
And he doesn’t know
that the next time
he will be in a tux
adoring her like this
will be for different reasons,
at
her
funeral.

She doesn’t know
that I will have her smile or
that I will pick dandelions
and put them on the marble stone of her grave.

She doesn’t know
That she’ll never meet her grandkids.
That the only thing close
to her homemade cookies
when we visit Grandpa
will be
the Chips Ahoy chewies
he puts in the glass jar with a red lid.

But, I wonder if Grandpa—
looking at her white dress with such adoration—
could ever fathom
that the cookies in the jar
won’t
be
hers.