

Watermelon Whispers

The man sat at the wood kitchen table. He had been sitting at *this* table, in *this* spot of the kitchen, for over fifty years. Surrounded by the same wooden chairs and situated beneath the same hanging fruit basket with the same cheap, plastic fruit nestled within. A slight breeze wafted through the windows, breaking the smothering humidity of another July day. The window air conditioning unit in the adjacent living room hummed audibly but didn't offer any relief to where he sat. His son, Dave, was in the kitchen cutting up a watermelon. Dave had brought it home from the grocery store with the hope it would be an easy food for him to chew and swallow.

Subconsciously he made a “hmp” noise. To think it had come to this. His whole life he had been an able-bodied man. He had been a plumber, a mechanic, a repairman, a father and a husband; he had provided for his family and done everything he could to ensure they had what they needed. Only to be bested, slowly, in the here and now by Parkinson's. Just a few weeks ago he had finally relented to using a cane for longer walks. “Longer” now constituting the walk from the lone-standing garage to the house. He shook his head. The shaking was bad now, but it was the persistent fatigue that plagued him. The littlest exertions would wipe him out for the entire day. Even a trip to the grocery store was no longer plausible-which was why their son had come to live with them. Dave did the majority of the grocery shopping now, not to mention the yard work and driving them to numerous doctor appointments. His wife, suffering from dementia, perpetually thought it was almost Christmas. She wandered around the house incessantly, waiting for Christmas packages to arrive in the mail. They never came, but she never seemed to mind. She would sit in the kitchen and drink cups of watered-down coffee, having conversations with her mother who had been dead for forty years. But she was happy, and she still knew who he and Dave were. So, he was thankful for that.