

English Student Reflective/Imaginative Writing - Year 11 Yearly Examination

There's an old photo stored away in the deep dark crevices of iron drawers and cold garages. A simple photo, taken on film in 1996. I've never truly understood the power of the photo, the bald-headed and seemingly malnourished man staring at the stoic figure of a young woman. She appeared strong, but her eyes stunk of pain and sadness. The glare of the flash truly accentuated her inner turmoil. A picture of a man I never knew, and the silent sculpture of a woman I love and cherish every day. It's odd; when I was younger it was nothing more than another bald head, like Mr. Clean or Bruce Willis. But as I grow older, as I remember the long nights of my mother staring at the memory of a fading photograph, I grew to understand the power of memory, the pain and sacrifice it takes to lock away the last piece of love in a dark, hidden world.

Memory is a cancer. A tumour that will always stand the test of time. Not like the one in the photo, but a poison that destroys the mind with notions of "what was" and "what could have been." Men and women could slave their lives away, plagued by the weight of memory that sat upon their shoulders.

I never understood. It's a photo? But I never met the man. Because memory is more than a framed photo or a monochrome picture locked in a vault; memory is life. If there is no afterlife, then it is memory. The stimulus and embodiment of life after death, for when our memory is forgotten to the world, then we are truly dead.

But it is a futile task, to live another's life for them. To examine every detail, each crease, each dirty smudge and blur. When I see the man in the photo, I know why he looks away. He cannot bear to look into the camera, the flash of the future. But my mother never understood; she did not understand the trespasses of the past, a cancer worse than the one that stole her husband.