

A Monologue About My Favourite Cowboy

By: Selah Schmaltz

My poppa once told me that before he met my grandmother he had a trip to Africa planned with a close buddy. After he met her he stayed in the mountains and plains of British Columbia to be with her. He always told it in a manner that made it seem as though it was nothing more than a fact. Like he was telling me the day the constitution was signed; his words opened up a view he didn't think I noticed, but boy did I ever. I noticed so much more than anyone could have imagined .

I looked at him and saw a war being waged. One side wore armour made of linen in every colour of the rainbow, this side danced on top of mountains and howled with the wolves, this side was wild. The other side wore jeans, a flannel shirt. Two stepped in barns at two am, fell in love under the moon and knew god existed when he saw the sun come up over the fields that seemed to stretch on forever. Both were content, and both longed to know if the grass truly was greener on the other side. They looked at each other, one sat in their hometown wondering how the other could be so lost. The other stretched under new stars every night feeling sorry that the other side never left the limits of the county they had been raised in. Both saw complacency in the others lives, and couldn't understand how they didn't crave more. But what is more? That was when I knew that some questions had no right answer.

When he looked at me I knew he had no regrets for he saw the fruit of his labour in my smile. But when he looked out the window after a nap, I couldn't help but wonder if he was dreaming about what would have happened had he chose roaring creatures and fierce adventures over the annual rodeo and dancing with the wind as you hang the sheets to dry. This was a man who spent his whole life being utterly content and happy yet still so complacent you could catch him in a day dream wishing he was far away.

The day before I lost him forever I saw on his skin peace. I looked into his eyes searching for the answer that had brought a centuries long feud to rest but I only found more questions. Questions about the sunrise in the desert or how the stars kiss the ocean in the middle of the night. Before he took his last breathe I saw a cowboy dancing on his cheek with eyes as untameable as a mountain lion and I knew that he never did answer the question. With peace came the promise that he would live the life he didn't choose after he was finished with this one. Sometimes I pick up a dime from the ground and know he put it there and I wonder where he is visiting me from this time.

My grandmother on the other hand has skin that drips with milk and honey and I can see how at the time for him, it was no question. There is a warmth about her touch that declares her as a home. Her arms created a sanctuary for the thoughts that threatened to boil me alive inside my head. I can imagine they did the same for him. She showed me the beauty in belonging and I saw why a man so at war with himself had fallen so hard for her. In order for war to happen, one must have something to fight for. She was his homeland. She was the only reason there was a question. That was the source of his greatest joy, but also his greatest pain.