

EULOGY: GRANDMOTHER



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There will come a point in each of our lives
where we will be forced to confront,
the mortality of the people we love.

Many of us in this room,
are familiar with this heartache all too well.

As I look around...I see those of you...
who have lost sisters and brothers.

Some have tragically lost a child.
And many of you...have lost a parent.

I myself – have lost my wallet, if you could please turn it to the lost and found, I'd
greatly appreciate it.

Whether it's been your mother, father, grandmother or grandfather
It's no doubt a hefty challenge to learn to let go of...
That person that has taught and instilled in you...everything they possibly could
to prepare you for your own journey in this world.

To be honest...I would not know what to do without my mother
Which is why, unbeknownst to her – I'm having her cryogenically frozen.

Hi mom. Don't get too comfortable in that warm chair.

In a big family such as ours...the odds of death being an occurrence are great
If only because the gift of life...has been even greater.

Today we are here to mourn...
and celebrate the life of Margara Campiz Vega De La Torre.
Which translated into English means – Spanish woman with a very long name.
That no one at bingo could ever pronounce.

She was one of the most courageous, fearless, independent woman I've ever known.
A gift that she so generously shared with us all.

She leaves behind a great family that she created...and nurtured all on her own.
Including: a daughter, a son and his wife
12 grandchildren and their spouses

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over 20 great-grandchildren
Numerous great-grandfish, a few great-granddogs and 1 great-grandturtle named
Katie

For me...I not only lost a grandparent
I lost a best friend.
As she was, to anyone in need of her love and time.
And I was in need of a lot of it.

I was blessed to share many days and nights with her.
From going to the park...where I would watch her knit and drink,
To hanging out with her at the night club – where I would watch her knit and
drink.

She's probably the only woman who knew how to get away with,
Smuggling a 7-year-old child into a bar.

My favorite part about having her as a best friend...
Were the endless M&M's with peanuts she continually supplied me.
It was as if she wanted me to forever live up to my childhood nickname – Fatso.

For those of you in the dark...my grandmother blessed me with the moniker: Fatso.
While children at school called me Christopher...my grandmother orchestrated the
entire family – to call me Fatso.
Essentially...my grandmother – was also my bully.

One thing she loved just as much as her family...were the holidays.
Though her Christmas trees were the size of baby elves, her large Menorah lit
brightly.
And her Christmas spirit and cheer was as large as the fat Buddha hanging on her
wall.
She was either a religiously progressive woman – or very confused.

I'll never forget the look on grandma's face when she came home one day,
to discover...that I had opened up all of the Christmas gifts.
None of which were mine. Apparently – she wasn't confused at all.

I had no other choice but to lie...
I told her – Santa must've did it!

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For whatever reason...she pretended to believe me,
and wrapped them up again ...without giving it another thought.
Santa however, gave it plenty of thought – and made sure I got socks that year.

Other than holidays...she also loved birthdays.
She was the type of woman who sent a birthday card...every year...to every
one...who ever existed.
She always gave at least five dollars...
and wrote special birthday messages – of which I could never understand.

Not because it was in Spanish...
but because she had grandma handwriting syndrome.
It always looked as if she found the time to sit down, and fill out a birthday card –
in the middle of an earthquake.

That was one of the important lessons I got from her.
No matter what...always make the time for the people you love!

Another lesson she taught me...
Never call an exterminator to fix your roach problems.
Just paint over them.
Even Bob Ross would've been impressed.

She was never really good at killing *all* of the roaches...
Some of them kept coming back.
Perhaps someone should have told her – to stop sending them birthday cards.

She was strong.
I remember how stoic she remained after her dog, Cha-Cha had passed.
Cha-Cha was her longtime companion.
And though the dog was evil to me...I could tell it really loved her.
And I was jealous of it.
But also very happy...that that little sucker – could no longer bark at me ever
again.

Not long after that... Grandma got another dog...named Terry
At least that's what I thought his name was.
With grandmas accent, and the cigarette that was always lodged in her mouth...
The dog's name could have easily been Teddy...or Jerry – or Patrick.

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Then, when Patrick passed...
I remembered for the first time...seeing her really sad.
And I thought to myself – “OMG – we have got to get this woman a cat!”

Those moments were rare though...she was a woman who always laughed and enjoyed herself.
That was the grandmother I knew.
The self-sufficient woman who could make any gray cloud...turn into a rainbow.
The woman who I had to learn how to say goodbye to...a long time ago.

After her stroke...we forged a new relationship.
It involved many hours watching Telemundo.
Only this time – neither of us understood what was going on.

It was fun having to remind her each and every time I saw her...
What my name was - Fatso.

Sometimes I'd hold her hand...and wondered what she was thinking about.
I'd follow her gaze to a big crucifix hanging on the wall.
And found that Jesus...was eerily looking back at me...like,
“Hey - I have no idea what she's thinking about either.”

It was a blessing to be given some more time with her.
She continued to enjoy many parties, celebrations, holidays and birthdays.
Though she didn't function as she used to...she remained alive and present.

And though she couldn't communicate well – I always knew when she wanted me to shut the hell up.

Still...somehow...she kept the family close together.

What she revered to a lot...was her Puerto Rican flag.
She loved that place...it was her home.

She built her house there...brick by brick.
Penny by penny.
Over the span of many years...just so she could live there again...
And she did it!

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Even though she couldn't stay there for too long by herself,
What she set out to do...was finally accomplished - getting the hell away from all
those roaches.

I'm kidding of course – they went with her.
Apparently no one told her to stop sending them birthday cards.

Her new home, was not to just call her own...
but one to share with her family.

She was an inspiration.

Truthfully...I'm not ready to let her go.
Though I'm happy that... she's finally able to rest...
I really wish she could have held on a little bit longer.
Winter is a terrible time to have a funeral.

Nevertheless...she's now truly... at peace.
Something that I hope brings some solace to everyone who loved her.

Her children took great care of her...
and there's nothing more a mother could want or ask for...
but to pass peacefully...in her children's care.

What other families could easily see as a challenge...
you (her children), saw the opportunity to create even greater memories.

I would like to share with you all...a little quote...
That I captured from the movie, Benjamin Button.

*"We are meant to lose the people we love...how else would we know how important
they are to us?"*

I was so touched by that...that I would now like to leave you all with a quote of my
own...

"Remember to enjoy every waking minute of your life.
Especially the years between being an infant...and being an elder.
Because those are the years you learn and grow the most.
And because it's the only time you'll get – before you have to wear a diaper again!"