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Even If

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Aletheia—The Alpha Chi Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship

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Abstract

The following pair of poems intimately explore the emotional landscapes of grief and identity by reflecting on mundane events that unravel in the aftermath of loss. In one poem, mundane acts become entry points for grief's quiet arrival. In another, a worn vehicle serves as a metaphor for reclamation and transformation. Both poems investigate preservation of meaning when memory fades, and how self-worth is rebuilt. Central to the pair is a theme of "even if," a phrase that symbolizes resistance and resignation, encapsulating the paradox of keeping afloat and persevering through. Through extended metaphor and repetition, the works invite readers into the tension between what is lost and what is remade, questioning what "it" is.

Keywords: *grief, memory, identity, transformation*

It didn't hit her in the office or upon seeing his face,
but in the repetitive motion of vacuuming the carpet
back and forth, was where it hugged her.
Hoping her struggle to breathe
would be covered by the sound of the machine,
taking the last of what was real.
Convincing herself she would stop
after the last patch of carpet was clean,
as if the day she spent prior there,
watching the light in his eyes,
was only a dream.

It never happened.
There was no more proof. Only memory.

But memory failed her,
because when she finally felt grief's comfort,
she remembered she had kissed him one last time.
Her lips still contained reality.
She promised never to wash those lips,
to hold onto that dream for as long as possible.
That feeling was so much more than comfort.
She finally defeated grief.

It only lasted four hours.
Forgotten that, ten minutes after "you,"
she brushed her teeth and washed her face.

No more proof. Only memory.



The 1992 model was a baby's blanket.
Not held for beauty.
Not held for sentiment.
Held for this thought only:
if it gets to fade,
where all distinguishable features erase,
why do they expect her to stay the same?

She'll wait until the paint chips,
until the tires break—
better if it's ripped down to steel
no one casts a glance to,
because only she will redesign it
into something meaningful,
knowing its history and worth,
all so no one can take credit ever again.

