

## English 12: Composition

Scale: 6

### Comment:

This response was awarded a 6 because of its maturity of style. The reader is engaged by its strong voice; furthermore, the ending is subtle, yet powerful.

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The gruff voice, the vanilla flavoured cigar smoke, the laugh always resulting in a hacking cough, these were the distinct memories of my grandfather. Perhaps what best described him was the vanilla flavour, plain and simple, exactly how he lived his life and interacted with everyone. I guess being born during a time of war will harden anyone's emotions but was a joke, a giggle or a smile really that hard to ask for? And this was all before the cancer hit, attaching itself to his left like a lion to its prey. No matter how strong and sturdy he may have ached this was not a battle he was going to win via a stern look or raising of his voice.

No matter how well I did in school or how many sports teams I captained he never once acknowledged my accomplishments. The one true thing in which he showed compassion for was football.

"There's nothing like giving up your heart and soul on every play and then to get right back up and it again" he told me once.

This was perhaps the sole reason why I tried out my junior year, making the team and eventually winning Most Valuable Player honours. Once again I received little recognition from him. The severity of the cancer grew by the day, and already violent cough turned into a gut wrenching ordeal lasting minutes on end. I developed a deep sense of pity towards him although showing anything of the sort to his face was met with a swift "whatcha looking at kid."

As his days dwindled down my visits to the hospital increased, many times not even seeing him, merely to help my grandmother cope or drive other family members. His body mass dwindled as well, strong sturdy muscles giving way to useless fat and eventually skin and bones. He was now but a fragment of himself.

Football, the one thing we shared, the one bond we had, was nearing the completion of its season. Thus the Super Bowl was upon us, an event my grandfather hadn't missed in his lifetime. However this one, the nurses told him, was one he would have to miss. The dingy hospital of our small town did not provide the simple convenience of working lights let alone a television restricting any hope of him watching the game.

This, I knew, was the last straw for my grandfather and he dwelled into deep depression knowing his end was soon. I also knew I couldn't let this happen and immediately brought my laptop to his room the day of the big game and set up it up so he could watch his beloved sport one last time. There was no thank you or even a nod throughout the game until the last seconds ticked away on the game clock. As I looked over to my dying grandfather I saw a man

overcome with emotions. A small tear running down his face he croaked "I'm so proud of you." And that's all I ever needed.