Emily
3rd Place
6th Grade, Almond School

Silently sitting, I listened, every word settling in my heart. The tale stunned me. My grandfather. I barely had a chance to meet him before he passed. My mother spoke fondly of him. When I think of him, I think of how he never gave up, how he persevered through such hard times. I know that is what he will want from me too, and that is what I will try to give him, so that he can be proud. This story has shaped me into who I am.

My grandfather went on a trip to Taiwan, but when he left, he didn't know that he wouldn't be allowed home. Yearning for his family, he wanted to communicate. But…letters between the countries were forbidden. He sent letters to Hong Kong, begging for help. Year after year, he cried for his family, yet his voice remained unheard. One day, he sent a message inside a card to a friend in Japan. Inside, there was a piece of paper that simply had four words written. "Is my family okay?" After years of trying, he at last received a reply. For 40 years, he waited. At last he was able to return, but was never able to see the person who meant the most to him again.

By the time my mother finished the story, I saw tears glistening in her eyes and spilling across her face. Now I think of my grandfather with every choice I make, and every breath I take. Every story needs someone to tell it, and someone to listen to it, for it to be kept alive. I intend to do my part in keeping my heritage alive. This story is a somber one, but it still deserves to be told generation upon generation. Every story, good and bad, joyful and somber, deserves a special place within my heart.