

*Feb 5, 2013.*

*My grandmother is going crazy.*

*Not the funny kind of crazy where she thinks she is a duck.*

*Her crazy torments her in the form of a waking, tormenting purgatory. She has many years left in this world, but her mind is leaving us.*

*She is trapped in religious terror, the kind that wakes you screaming in the middle of the night and has you praying to a God forced upon you.*

*Confusion is her tormentor. We call it that or paranoia or delusions, but how can that be?*

*We say, confused. We mean that she walks lightly, constantly looking over her shoulder, in fear that the government is watching her.*

*She runs down the halls of her building at night, screaming at her neighbours because she thinks they are spies.*

*She hoards vast amounts of what seem to us, the most incomprehensible things: Vitamin D, plastic bags, books, batteries, pot holders and toilet paper.*

*She clutches at her rosary and insists that the elders are witch doctors; that I should not accept a blanket from them, because "who knows what evil powers it has."*

*Is it crazy?*

*Objectively I look at her small frame, accentuated by the overly-large glasses she wears, that make her an owl. Her huge eyes insist that she is not. I believe her.*

*She turned out exactly as she was intended to. This is what the schools did.*

*Our government sent her there, tore her away from her family and land and placed her in the hands of abusers.*

*Her neighbours turned her in, telling the government that her parents were hiding children.*

*At school she was malnourished, fed meager often bad food, rationed to be taught "restraint" and "discipline" to "tame" her of her savage wantonnesses.*

*She worked and did chores for the school to learn civilized behaviour.*

*She worked in the kitchen and when she burned her hands, she was slapped instead of soothed.*

*The nuns did her many unkindnesses. She was a particularly wild child and they took it upon themselves to beat the Lord into her.*

*That they did.*

*So when she looks at me and tells me our people are savages and witch doctors, I believe her.*

*Don't mistake my meaning, I don't agree with her, but I believe it is the truth they taught her, the one she has lived her entire life with.*

*Because if our people were not frightful savages, the worst possible fate for a human being, how could they have done it?*

*And her parents must have known it was true, they handed her over.*

*My grandmother is going crazy.*

*My grandmother is the successful product of Residential school."*

*Carley Kennedy, January 13, 1987 ~ February 10, 2014*