

# Nana

The air filled with mossy petrichor knocked against my window, seeping through the steel cracks. The roosters began to crow as the light of dawn cast a gold hue across the sky. The countryside glowed a healthy green in the sun's glorious light. I decided to vacation to the countryside to get away from the rowdiness of the city. Nana had inherited his father's farm that sprawled across acres of land that never seemed to end. On the far end of the farmhouse was a huge barn with animals ranging from the tiniest chicks to the plumpest sheep and everything in between. Grandpa also had a huge field with mielies, wheat and other smaller plantations with a variety of fruits and vegetables. My Nana loved every inch of the plot however, he especially loved the small green pond at the end of the farm. Near the green pond was my little brown farm shed. Because the shed was never used, Nana made it into a life size dollhouse for me, decorated with kitschy bedroom furniture and porcelain ornaments. I spent most of my time in my little shed watching my grandfather attend to his farming activities.

Every morning, Nana would ring the gold bell outside of his farmhouse to call me for Nani's famous scones and tea for breakfast. Afterwards, Nana would leave Nani and I to attend to the farm whilst we baked in the morning sun on the front porch. After lots of giggles and laughs with my grandma, she would head back inside to begin cooking lunch whilst I would journey back to my farm shed. Nana would begin his routine at the farmhouse to feed the animals. My grandfather's adoration for animals far surpassed the superficial admiration to their cute appearance. To him, animals weren't an inferior species but rather the most unique, loyal friends who devote unconditional affection and appreciation towards their owners. To him, the amount of love and care he had for his farm animals would be reciprocated tenfold. I remember he would tell stories of times he had sworn the animals had spoken back to him, fully understanding what he had said. He would tell us about all the stories these animals would tell him. He said he especially loved the dairy cows' stories as they would gossip about the other cows from the other farms. Grandma and I would brush it off and laugh at his bizarre stories but watching him smile and swoon at the animals as he filled the water trough and feed containers had made me begin to believe Nana. After Nana had filled all the troughs and containers, he would make his way onto the large field of all his crops. Nana was always overlooking his farm whether the farm had been freshly ploughed or time for harvest. This scene of my grandfather soaking in the sun amongst his crops was simply the most beautiful portrait to paint. By noon, Nana would be resort to the green pond just outside my shed window. He would cool down under the huge oak trees with a cigarette in his hand. He would hum the tunes of his wedding song and pull out his newspaper.

Before Nana had realized I was gazing at his effortless comfort on the bench, the farmhouse bell had rung. Nani was done making lunch. He looked to my window and

caught me watching him. Nana smiled a smile that reached his ears and gracefully waved at me. The lines on his face and the deep creases in his cheeks etched the story of his love and care for the world and all its beings. Just as Nana had been the backbone of feeding his community, he was the backbone of my family. Just before I waved back, a gust of wind swept the leaves and dust across my window, only for Nana to disappear. I left the shed to sit on the bench by the green pond and attempted to appreciate the countryside view, like my grandfather did. Tears twirled in my eyes as I tried to reciprocate the smiles Nana had shared with me. The wind began to rustle the leaves on the oak trees and whistled the tunes, like my grandfather did.