Day one, the hottest day in July. The kind of hot that mkes the neighbors forgo underear and plant themselves in front of oscillating fans. Feet planted in small kiddie pools filled with tepid tap water, topped off wth bagged ice from the crner market. The breeze from the fan casting acros the iced pools dos nothing to dimiish the warmth from their radiating bodies. Instead it pushes the sweat further acrss their faces and thighs util they are all shiny with sweat.

1

It’s nearly impossible to forget day one. You try, yet day one is the day you’ll scrmble for breath. You’ll put on the braest of faces to give your daughter Thea oxygen as you hold the side of her head to your chest. She will appreciate the firm pressure you apply to her quivering body. The grief inunating from her youhful frame, forcing you back- one, two, three, steps until you both collapse onto the couch. Sweat and tears, they’re all the same.

2

Hw can a girl live without her mother? How will I breathe without her modeling wht a strong exhale looks like? You wonder in your motinal greed, Where does she keep all of the passwords? Thea’s birth certificate? Is she allergic to anything?

3

4

Their day one is polar oppoite of your day one. The body that carried you through life for the past four decads decided the narrative of livng a nice long life is a lie. To find out that you’re going to die is far less painful than hearng that you are dead. The dead don’t hear pain. The dead don’t feel it either.

5

You ae sent home with instructions of geting your affairs in order. Pamphlets titled, “How to tell your loved ons that you are dying,” as if there is a siple bullet point plan to button up all of your affairs before you go.

6

Planning a funral is foreboding. The weatherman says to epect more heat hazes. You don’t know exctly what that is, but you’ve already spenthours on the internet searching for a cure. What's another few minutes?

Heat hze: also called heat shimer, another refers to the inferior mirage observed when viewing obects through a mass of heted air. Relief flods your body, panic eases up. This isn’t the ed, it’s all a mirage. It has to be.

7

8

Everthing after the first day is now called the in between, and that’s just how you’ve come to accept it. Call your moter more, but not so much tat she suspects tat there is something to be worried about. Mothers know.

Revel in the fct that the word hug happns to be the first thre letters of your husbad's name, as he is the bet hugger you’ve ever met. Hugging him a little bit longer feels like a possble cure for the inurable.

9