

The Corners of My Mind

By Sheila Johnson

I don't remember ever being sent to the corner to sit or stand because of something I did wrong. But I have corners of my mind where I go to release, repair, and restore.

I use one of these corners to store the fear of what is becoming of our world. What will become of the generation that is not taught to obey authority or celebrate the wisdom of their elders? I have fears of waking up and not remembering my name or address or who to call if I get lost in my car. I store away fears of going to bed in the dark and waking up in that same darkness that will not be defined by the mere absence of light. I store away these fears in the farthest most corners of my mind.

I have another corner of my mind where I relish the memories of my grandparents whose arms I often long to feel one more time. This is where I keep the essence of my grandmother that taught me to be a lady at all times. Nestled beside it is the strength of my grandfather's arms that carried me through the caverns in Carlsbad, New Mexico because I was too tired to walk the length of one more ice-bordered path. I also manage to squeeze in the aroma of my grandmother's home cooked meals and the richness of my grandfather's creativity.

There's a musical corner of my mind that holds the voices of Ella Fitzgerald and Marian Anderson. It is in this corner where the songs of the civil rights movement abide—*We Shall Overcome, Go Tell it on the Mountain, and Let Freedom Ring*. This corner is also filled with my favorite Gospel music that tells the story of redemption and freedom for ALL people.

I have a gratitude corner that is always in need of expansion. I try to fill it up every day. I keep the smiles of kind strangers that lifted me when I was feeling alone. In this corner, I harbor the voices of encouragement from friends and family who spoke victory into my spirit when I needed to cross the next finish line. In this corner I also hold memories of struggles, disappointments, and failures that have taught me valuable lessons. In this corner of gratitude, my faith grows, and my appreciation of life blossoms.

Lastly, I have designed a corner in my mind (perhaps the largest, and my favorite) that I call the Village. The Village has communal eyes that see and united ears that hear. It has a single heart beat of: the people whose genes I share, people from another mother who love me unconditionally, people who continue to be my teachers as well as my students, people who are able to speak more than one language of love, and people who are One with God.

If I must be sent, please send me to the corners of my mind.