Pondering a Grey Area

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Pondering a Grey Area

If there is anything that truly irks me, it's the grey area in life. I get scattered enough as it is. The grey eventually has to turn either black or white. I usually prefer white, but in this case I would've been just as happy with black. The longer the grey remains, the crazier I become.

Wednesday, January 25
Minutes before midnight, I received a phone call from my dear friend Celia Calimlim, whom I've bonded with since 7th grade. Her voice was enriched with fear and concern. "My aunt fainted at work. They just called my mom ... They said it was an emergency ... they're doing CPR on her right now."

I didn't know how to respond. So I turned to God and then asked Celi, "Do you wanna say a little prayer?"

Cel and I prayed aloud over the phone. "Please bless Celia's auntie at this moment. Be by her side through - -" I silently fumbled for words, "whatever it is she's going through." We wrapped it up quickly.

A rush of relief swept over me when Celia said, "Amen." I can't stand lingering in a grey mist.

Thursday, January 26
My mother reported recent news on Tita Virgi's condition. (As a sign of respect, it's a Filipino custom to refer to your parents' close friends as "Tito", for a man, and "Tita", for a woman.) Either a stroke or a heart attack had struck Tita Virgi the night before. My mom didn't know which, but that didn't matter to me; they're both the same in the sense that they can kill you ... or, sometimes, partly kill you.

Friday, January 27
I called Cel from work. Like our prayer, the conversation ended quickly. She didn't want to talk about "it." Basically, all we said to one another was:

"Cel, how is she?"
She's practically dead, El."
In the living world, how much more grey can life possibly get than being "practically dead"?

Sunday, January 29
Alex (ministry leader and respected family friend of both Cel and me), my boyfriend Gary, and I visited Tita Virgi. When we arrived, Celia was at home, still asleep. I wondered if the grey of her aunt's comatose condition was bothering her at all. It burdened me just to think about it. The eerie haze was still in my mind as Alex, Gary and I walked through the hospitals main entrance doors.

We were on our way to the intensive care unit on the second floor. Before we entered the elevator, I blurted out to my two companions, "I don't understand why they're keeping her on machines. (Grey.) Do the doctors think she'll live (White)? Is that why? (Grey.) If she's going to die (black), then why keep her on those machine? (Grey.) Alex and Gary offered some believable suggestions, but my questions still remained as we walked towards her room.

The moment we set foot into the room, Alex approached Celia's Lola (meaning grandma). The tiny, white-haired lady was standing over Tita Virgi and mumbling through her small, quiet sobs. "Wake up Ana'ko .. oh, Ana'ko .. wake up!" ("Ana'ko" means, my daughter, in Ilocano - a Filipino tongue.)

Alex wrapped a gentle arm around the weeping old woman. "Lola, you need to be strong for Virgi."

Then he said to all of us, "Let's pray," and Lola's tears subsided.

Alex led as he, Lola, Gary and I laid our hands upon Tita Virgi's body. At first I wondered whether or not I was resting my hands on a lifeless body. But the grey thought passed as I put my trust in God, as Celia did.

Later that day I asked Celia how she felt about the doctors keeping her aunt on an artificial respirator - considering that Tita Virgi was "practically dead."

"It doesn't matter, El", Celia affirmed. "It's all in God's hands."

Maybe grey is okay.

By: Ellyn Ong