

Topic 3 (Commonapp): Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.

It hangs on the wall opposite my bed - a photograph of my grandpa and me. I am laughing while my grandpa's safe hands are holding me tightly to his chest. Is it only a loving memory? If so, why do I feel grandpa's presence mingled with the world around me?

My grandpa and I had walked together a long way. He was there to guide me, to teach me, to protect me. One dark evening, he embarked on a new journey, a journey to the unknown. The rest of his family was bereft, I was left behind. Then life continued in its own rhythm. The tide splashed on the shore, the stars twinkled in the same vast sky. I carried on with my studies, songs and friends. I have passed two years of my life without the shadow of the sturdy tree. Storms have struck, but I have pulled through. In my hectic days, grandpa is only a memory, encased within the frames of the picture, lifeless in this buoyant life of ours.

There he is sitting, drowsiness sweeping over his serene aristocratic face - only to be aroused in times of my restlessness and solitude. When silence rules over me, I can hear grandpa's story of the fisherman and the genie. When I am stuck with a mathematical problem, grandpa in the picture guides me to the solution. When I mistreat the distressed, the almond-shaped eyes of my grandpa seem humiliated. Whenever I play the harmonium, he seems to sit in the sofa in front. He listens to my songs quietly and then as I look up, he vanishes in thin air. As I lie on my bed at night, sleepless worrying about my future, sparks in his watery eyes begin to float in front of my eyes. Every morning, grandpa seems to descend from the picture. I can hear the clattering of his walking stick as he walks past my room. I still see him holding my arms strongly, swirling me around jovially. If he is confined to the unknown

world, then who is this man? Why do I feel an urge to stand before the photograph at the news of my success and failure?

Where is he now? Is he in Hell or Heaven? Is he the tall bushy willow tree in our house yard? Is he in the fresh breeze whispering through my room? Or is he only in the past, only a memory to be cherished. This photograph seems to tell me -