

Dear cancer, you've been all too familiar this past year. Up until last November 6, I had known you to do one thing and one thing only, kill my grandpa. He died before I was born so I never thought it to be too sad that he had cancer, because I would never have to remember the pain of losing him. I had a view of cancer to be bad and I would always feel bad for people who knew and were people who were diagnosed with it; but never thought it would happen to me. Talking about cancer was never really that hard either because I thought I knew I had nothing to fear, that my family would never experience such a horrible thing. So when I first heard that my brother was diagnosed with Leukemia; I was shocked.

I remember that day well. I had just finished an after school writing club at my school and was expecting to be picked up on time by my mom as I always was. Because of that, I knew, After fifteen minutes had past the usual pickup time, that something wasn't right; but I wasn't freaking out or anything. I figured that there was probably just traffic or something of that sort. Five minutes later though, I decided to call my mom. When she picked up she told me that something had happened and that my brother Grant was in the hospital. I started crying and started to calm myself with the thought that maybe it was some false alarm or just double checking to make sure he was completely all right. When I got in the car though, my mom told me the doctors suspected he had Leukemia and later that night it was confirmed. Right after my mom told me he was completely diagnosed; my mind was a storm of thoughts. What will I do tomorrow at school? Is he gonna die? What would life be like without him? What does this mean for my family. I started crying, making everything worse. My grandma, who had just come over to watch me and my siblings, came in my room where I was laying

and said it's going to be okay. And it was in that moment that I looked in my grandma's eyes which are usually full of certainty turn to questions that I knew in my mind that nobody knew if it was going to be okay.

For the next few weeks my brother stayed in the hospital while the doctors told my parents how to take care of him at home. Me and my siblings kept living a normal life, as normal as it can be with a sibling with cancer. We were parentless and had to put up with all these questions of how's your brother doing. I remember during that time how I would wish someone would ask me if I was okay and nobody did and it hurt me and still does when people just ask how he's doing and not me. It makes me feel guilty too because I know it should be all about him in his time of pain and not about me even if I have pain too, though emotional not physical.

When my brother came home things did not all of a sudden go back to normal. There were still doctor visits and sometimes he would go back to the hospital because he would get sick and things would get stressed again in the house because of it. I would have to stay after school for an hour and a half to two hours and I know that doesn't compare to some peoples waits, but to me it was and is the end of the world because I wasn't used to it prior to diagnosis.

These past few months my brother's been in maintenance and though it's hard I've tried to get used to hearing things like risk for relapse or liver failure. But I know I'll never completely get used to it especially now that my grandma was diagnosed with cancer of the bone marrow.

Overall, through now knowing multiple people with cancer like my great uncle who died 2 weeks ago, my Grandma who was diagnosed 2 months ago and my brother

who was diagnosed a year ago people mentioning cancer is not just something that I compare to something left on read; it's something that I respond to knowing the impact of it to well. Cancer's horrible and I wish I could take the pain away from those who suffer from it but I can't. All I can do is hope for a cure and try my hardest to have a positive no matter what is to come. That is my experience with cancer.