

Cristian Fernandez  
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## Gramita

Questions:

1. Who is the person that passed away?

My great-great grandmother, Gramita passed away in two thousand and six. She lived to the old age of a hundred and six years old. She was the great-great grandmother on my mom's side. She was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, then moved to another city for a short period of time. She then moved to a town outside of the main city in Mexico, Mexico City. She was an artist that moved to America not knowing barely any English, and decided to do the best that she could for the time she still had. She moved to America at a later age as you can imagine, trying to make the best of what she had become she brought (almost) her whole family with her to America to see if it would work.

2. What did this person mean to you?

I, personally only met her once when I was young, but from what I have heard from family members she loved and did a lot for her community. I met her when I was four years old, she was in the hospital because she got the shingles. She has, however impacted the people around me, making an impact on me and my life. She has inspired most of my family to appreciate art and the culture around the Mexican and Puerto Rican art style. Now, my family has art and pieces from her sort of in remembrance of her and her life and the things she wanted to get across to people. She inspired me to remember that art is important to all of us and can change the way we see things, this has made me see the world through a sort of "filter" to understand the stories and style of different and unique people. This has made all of us think differently and appreciate the art and the idea that all of our art is temporary and that to make it permanent, you need to make it last on people's ideas. The only other way I can think of her impacting me is that her mannerisms and ideas have been passed down through the family so that we all have the same ideas and works from her to make our lives better and more meaningful.

3. Why did you decide to create your sugar skull in remembrance of this person?

I chose to make my sugar skull in remembrance of Gramita because, well for one she is the only close relative of mine that was alive when I was alive, and the impact she had on my life, and the others in my family. The reason I decided to remember her because she is relatively close to me (I was alive during the same time she was) is because I think it's important to try to understand the life of someone before what they stand for or believe in is washed out, or watered down. This idea is important because I think that when someone's ideas are washed out, or are partially forgotten, there are ways their ideas are interpreted that make sense to the person who is interpreting, but not much to those who are not doing the interpreting, like me. This is also because we all have taken her message in a different way, some better and more true, and some interpreted in different and inaccurate ways.

4. How does the Sugar Skull symbolize this person?

My sugar skull reflects this person in a couple symbolic and surface ways. Symbolically, Gramita was an artist, so I tried to use as many colors as possible to show how varied and risk-taking she was. I noticed that in her paintings she uses a lot of colors and textures to try to make the painting pop. I however when trying to make my sugar skull didn't really succeed in texture, I tried to use watercolor paint to dissolve the top of the painting slightly, but it only made an ugly hole. This shows how the idea of taking risks and betting chances can have a negative effect on your creations, which from a lot of stories I heard about her she did a lot. The trim on the bottom represents artistic design, making it look better for design purposes only, it seemed like something she would have done.

5. How has "Día de los Muertos" opened your mind up to celebrating the passing of loved ones?

"Día de los Muertos" opens my mind to celebrating the dead in a lot of different ways. My idea of celebrating the dead is now in tribute and celebration of what they lived for, and not mourning the idea that someone is gone. This is important because of the amount of pain and suffering that we all go through to mourn someone when we are forgetting that this probably isn't what that person really wanted. This idea is important to me because it explains how all of us think differently and diversely about death and remembering the dead.

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Eulogy:

Yo soy Cristian Fernandez, Voy a presentar en memoria de mi abuela meyor. Su nombre para mi era Gramita , pero su exacto nombre era Marie . Nació en Puerto Rico . Su nombre de nacimiento er Rosa Fernandez. Vivió hasta tener cien años y seis. Falleció cerca de la casa de mis bisabuelos en Buffalo, Nueva York. Tenía muchos años. En conclusión ,mi abuela meyor amaba hacer no sólo arte, pero también hacer sonreír a la gente.

