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THE PHONE CALLS from my grandfather began after Charlie Palmieri died. Grief-stricken, my grandfather called each time one of his favorite musicians passed away. Delicately, he announced the passing as if it were that of a family member or someone we had actually known. The calls had little to do with any ability on my part to appreciate the musicians he revered. He turned to me by default; none of his children shared his interest in the music. My mother and uncles eschewed all things Puerto Rican, and his second set of children shunned his tastes, preferring hip-hop and Top 40 tunes. Though not the aficionado he was, I had spent my summer vacation humoring him, and now he treated me like a fellow enthusiast, viewing me as a sympathetic comrade, a person who shared his first family’s blood but not its resentment.

The first call came on a weekday evening in mid-September. Summer wouldn’t officially end for another week, but I had already started school. I was back in Brooklyn, completing my new junior high school homework at the kitchen table, when he called.

“Nena,” he said. “I’m glad it’s you. I have very bad news. Charlie has died.”
“Uncle Chalí?”

“Charlie Palmieri,” he said impatiently. “Remember I played ‘Porque me Engañas’ for you? That’s his song.”

“I’m sorry to hear that,” I said, baffled by his ability to grieve for a stranger.

“Yes, me too,” he said. “Such a surprise. A tragedy. Nobody could expect it.”

Silence stretched between us, but my grandfather stayed on the line. So I asked, “How did he die?”

“The heart, nena,” he said. “It was his poor heart.”

In the living room, my grandmother, mother, and two uncles huddled around the TV watching news of Hurricane Gilbert, the tropical storm that had been whipping Jamaica for the past two days and was rumored to be headed our way in New York. I turned away from the footage of Gilbert’s wreckage—destroyed crops, homes, buildings, and aircraft—to look down at my books open on the kitchen table, at my pencils next to the roll of paper towels and the canister of salt. “He’s in a better place now. Better the next world than this one,” I said, repeating words of comfort I’d once overheard my grandmother give.

There was an intake of breath on my grandfather’s end. “So true,” he said. “Thank you, nena.”

“Do you want to speak to anyone?” I asked. “They’re all here.”

“Maybe another time,” he said. Then he disconnected the call.

They had made a gift of me, sending me to him the summer I was twelve. Three days after my sixth-grade graduation, I’d boarded a plane for Puerto Rico, traveling with my grandfather’s sister, Titi Inez. For me, it was a summer of firsts. I had never met my grandfather and I had never been on a plane. Between the two, meeting my grandfather frightened me most. The little I knew of flying had come from watching Airplane!, so I expected it would be all in good fun and—secretly—I hoped for a seat beside Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. My family tried to prepare me for the journey, but my mother and uncles had been on a plane only once themselves, flying as young children to make a similar trip across the Atlantic to see the father who had neither loved nor wanted them enough to stay.
I had hoped never to meet him. He was the husband my grandmother had chosen not to remember, the father my mother and uncles refused to claim, the grandfather I knew only through pictures. I didn’t want to spend a month of my summer with him, but I was to be a peace offering, an olive branch extended between families, sent across the ocean to knit back wounds whose ragged edges had grown frayed with each passing year. Too bad I knew nothing about peace or diplomacy. Why my grandmother wanted me to visit was a mystery to me; she could hardly expect me to love a man who had caused her so much pain. “Give him a chance,” was all she’d said. “Let him tell you his side of the story himself.” I’d lived with one side of the story my whole life—the true side. Living in a house filled with his absence, I had no desire to meet a man who was unconcerned with what his desertion had done to all of us. My mother and uncles had grown up without him. While he had been beginning anew in a warm and sunny climate, his abandoned family had struggled just to get by. I’d watched my mother and my uncles nurture a self-wounding hatred for him. Denying his existence wasn’t easy. After all, he had left the three of them with his face. He was there in the reddish undertones of their skin, in the deep hollows of their cheeks, in the broad noses and the thin upper lips so unlike that of their mother. They could not discard him as easily as he could them. And, too, there was Titi Inez, his sister who still loved us as an aunt. She brought us stories of his doings. It was she who had told us when he moved from Bayamon to San Juan, when he bought a second car for his second wife. We couldn’t shake stories of him. Even in his absence he was there, a mocking presence.

He’d been waiting outside the San Juan airport in a dusty green station wagon. As soon as he and Titi Inez saw each other they hugged and lapsed into Spanish, completely ignoring me, uncaring that I couldn’t understand a word they said. I watched him while he ignored me, taking him in. The man I had pictured failed to merge with the flesh-and-blood one before me. His kinky hair, gnarled close to his head, was more gray than black, he was not as tall as my tallest uncle, and his face—plain, broad, and scowling—was red from overexposure to the sun. His ugliness was a disappointment. I’d assumed that a man
capable of devastating one family, then picking up and jumping into another woman's arms without so much as a by-your-leave would be unbearably handsome, but my grandfather was not such a man. Perhaps he had been in 1952 when my poor, foolish grandmother had agreed to marry him, but he was no longer.

After I got in the car, he tossed our luggage into the backseat beside me and took off, driving faster than anyone I'd ever seen drive before, heedless of other drivers. Neither he nor Titi Inez wore seatbelts, but I strapped myself in. The entire car was hot. When I scooted across the seat the leather burned the backs of my legs, and when I reached for the seatbelt its fibers and metal clasp were hot to my touch. I fidgeted, wedging my hands beneath my thighs to block the heat.

He watched me in his rearview mirror. “What's wrong with her?” he asked my aunt in English. “Does she have to go?”

Answering for myself, I said, “I'm hot.”

“You're on an island,” he said, as if he were talking to an imbecile.

“Puerto Rico is an island.”

“So is Manhattan,” I fired back. “It's not this hot there.”

“So is Manhattan!” he repeated, laughing. He met my gaze in his rearview mirror, smiling approval at my cheeky comeback. “Yes, they did say you were smart. There, on the left. Roll down your window. You'll be cooler.”

I rolled my window down, which only made the heat worse. The air came in a hot slap. My eyes felt suddenly dry. I rolled the window halfway back up and huddled away from it and the sultry air.

TITI INEZ LEFT the next day for Santurce, leaving me to a house full of relatives and strangers. My grandfather's children, Cháli and Cristina, took turns entertaining me. On the weekends they took me to Luquillo Beach, to Old San Juan, to El Morro, and to the movies to see Big and Who Framed Roger Rabbit? On weekdays they invited over Isi, a plump girl who knew no English but came with dolls and spoke the language of Barbie. Weekday evenings, they turned me over to my grandfather. Each evening I kept him company as he ate in front of the TV in the living room and watched baseball. After the game he
played records, drilling song after song into me along with the names of musicians—Blades, Colon, Lavoe, Nieves, Palmieri, Puente—who meant nothing to me. He identified instruments: guiro, timbales, trumpet, bongos, cowbells, congas. I couldn’t tell any of them apart. I was unused to hearing bands and orchestras. Occasionally my mother played *Earth, Wind & Fire* records, but most of the music I listened to at home was synthesized. Back at home, I had a Casio keyboard and at the press of a button I could have a host of instruments and prerecorded beats. I believed that you needed only an emcee, a deejay, two turntables, and speakers to make music. I had no experience with songs that required some ten or twenty people to make them a success.

These evenings, he offered no explanations for himself, unaware that I expected them. For him, I was something like Switzerland, a neutral entity, but one he hoped could be swayed. I went along with everything but laid in wait for him to reveal his true colors. I considered myself a spy in his house, a mole planted there to uncover his wickedness. Loyalty pushed my anger; love fueled my mistrust. At night, after everyone was asleep, I reconnoitered, walking barefoot through the one-level home, marveling at the ever-circling ceiling fan, the glass tables, the fat couches, the cool floor, the two cars parked by the side of the house, and the yard behind it overhung with coconut trees, wondering who my mother and uncles might have been if they’d lived in such a home raised amidst such privilege.

When the records failed to bring me over to his side, he drove us to Bayamon to see Héctor Lavoe sing live in concert.

Seeing the singer required our patience. We arrived only to wait in a disappointingly empty open-air arena. On all sides of me people spoke in Spanish. The audience thinned after the first hour, while we stayed and waited. As we waited, the people around us chanted the singer’s name, demanding his presence. Dressed simply in a square-shouldered cotton shirt with vertical lace patterns down the front and tan slacks, my grandfather sat with his hands beating a pattern upon his knees, patient and excited. He cared nothing for the wait. Of all the musicians he made me listen to, this tardy man was his favorite. If we had to wait until morning for him to appear, we would.
I began to fidget. To keep me distracted, my grandfather had plied me with a piragua, but after I'd scooped the shaved ice into my mouth and sucked the cherry flavor out, I was bored once more. Finally, I asked, “Why is he so late?”

My grandfather placed a restraining hand on my knee and said, “He's worth it.”

When I was about to argue the point, he cut me off, saying, “We have to forgive him, nena. He carries ghosts with him. Demons. He's a tormented man.”

“Can’t he get rid of them?” I asked.

“Nobody can escape them. You just have to stay out of their reach for as long as you can.” My grandfather looked down at me then, catching sight of my fear. “Don’t worry, nena,” he said. “Just do like Héctor.”

“What’s that?”

“Give them one hell of a chase.”

Sitting there in the open arena with the air close and hot, yet comforting, I asked what I wanted to know. Lowering my head, I focused on picking at the strings of my cutoff shorts and asked what happened between him and my grandmother.

“Your grandmother didn’t work. She was lazy,” he said. “My wife now works all of the time and she still had time to take care of the children.”

It was an unfair comparison. His wife now was healthy, but my grandmother had been sick her whole life long. Two ectopic pregnancies in between the three children she’d delivered had ravaged her body, weakening her already ill frame. His wife now had the benefit of living near her family and could rely upon help with her children, whereas he’d dragged my grandmother away from Brooklyn and across multiple states where she knew no one, had no help, and had to do everything alone. In a time before daycare centers, my grandmother had been burdened and overwhelmed. His abandonment had impoverished us. Thirty years old with failing health and three children under the age of ten, my grandmother had been no match for the life to which he’d left her. Abandoned in an unfamiliar city with no support system and no income, she had been forced to wait until her mother and sisters could save up enough to send for her and her children. She’d returned
to Brooklyn defeated and disheartened. By the time I knew her, she
was old and weary. I wanted to point these things out to him, to let
him know what he'd done to us, but instead, when I lifted my chin to
answer, I asked, “Didn’t you ever love her?”

“Shh,” he said. “Héctor is coming to the stage.”

The second call came five years later, after Héctor Lavoe’s death
brought my grandfather back to the United States, a place he'd aban-
doned in the ’60s when he'd abandoned my grandmother and their
three children, a place he'd vowed he would never return to. He came
only for the funeral, stayed a mere three days, and was gone before
we knew he'd even been in the country.

He called after he’d come and gone and was back in Puerto Rico,
thinking us none the wiser. He filled me in on how illness and hard
living had ruined the singer, ravaging his body, destroying his mar-
rriage, ruining his health. He told me Héctor Lavoe had wasted away
in a hospital, that he had died hooked up to more machines than I
could imagine. He talked for long minutes without ever once stop-
ing, until—finally—he took a breath. He said, “What a terrible way
for a man to die.” He waited for me to soothe him as I had long ago
that first time, but I would not say the words. It had taken effort just
to stay silent on my end and listen without hanging up. My mother,
uncles, and I were in the kitchen eating dinner when he called, and
I didn't want them to know it was him. I had my own anger; I didn't
need theirs. He had not called two years earlier when my grandmother
died. If he had he would have known how the cost of her funeral
had beggared us, sending my mother and uncles into a debt from
which we had yet to resurface. When my mother informed him of
the death, he had not cared. He had not sent so much as a sympathy
card to show he was sorry that the mother of his first three children
had died, but—over the phone now—there were tears in his voice for
Héctor Lavoe, a man who was no relation to him at all, a man who
had never even known my grandfather existed.

I refused to coddle his grief. I was in high school now, too old to
play along. I suppressed a fresh stab of hurt and anger and pulled the
long curling phone cord around the corner and into the living room. “How was the funeral?” I asked him. “Titi Inez told us you were there.”

And I could see it too. I could see him there, a face among the crowd of mourners at Héctor Lavoe’s funeral, crying and reaching out to touch the casket one last time. Easy to spot him among the throng of mourners who had taken their grief to the streets. Respectful in his mourning, dignified in his loss, my grandfather joined the funeral procession yet managed to walk apart. He would not have blended in with the howlers and the fainters. He would not have mourned like the others. There would have been no outpouring of emotions. He would not be among those screaming and crying, running for the hearse, reaching out to touch it, waving the bandera high or hoisting cardboard signs declaring love for Héctor, carrying pictures of him in his better days. See him walking silently, each step measured, content just to keep an inch of the car’s black chrome within sight? Though it wouldn’t have been noticeable to the casual observer, like the others, he too would have been crying. Unchecked, the tears would have formed two wet paths down his cheeks, but he would not have been embarrassed. He would not have tried to hide them or felt that they made him look weak. There would have been something remonstrative in his silent crying as, by example, he showed others the proper way to mourn. I could so easily see him there that way because it was the way I’d wanted to see him at my grandmother’s funeral.

He said, “When the king dies, everyone goes out to the grave.”

“He’s just a man,” I said.

“No, nena. Héctor was so much more than that for us.”

“Why didn’t you come to see us?” I asked. “You were close enough.” The funeral had been in the Bronx; a train would have easily brought him to Brooklyn.

“Nena, you and I, we are all right, but I didn’t think they would have wanted to see me.” My grandfather kept quiet on his end, as if silence would bring me around to his way of thinking. I took exception to the way he referred to his children without saying their names but put himself on a first-name basis with the dead singer. Maybe they wouldn’t have wanted to see him after he’d failed them at their mother’s
funeral, but if he had bothered to come, if he had made the smallest effort to try, maybe they would have allowed it anyway.

“You’re right,” I said, barely recognizing my own voice, hoarse with feeling. “They wouldn’t have wanted to see you. And neither would I.”

I hung up then, and I did not speak to my grandfather for many years.

He returned to the States only once more, coming to New Haven for his youngest son Chali’s wedding.

We were seated at different tables. My grandfather and his second family were seated up front. During the reception he made his way over to me. “Pretty soon it will be time for a wedding of your own,” he predicted. He pulled out a chair that had been encased in a satin slipcover, the surplus fabric tied back in a loose yet tasteful bow. He seemed out of place sitting in such a chair. Though he wore a suit, he still looked like the man in the guayabera and the simple slacks.

“I’m in no rush,” I told him, looking away from him to the glittering chandelier above our heads. I was twenty-five and, earlier that year, I’d bought a three-bedroom row home in Philadelphia, the city I’d moved to after college. I was giddy with my new status as a homeowner and burdened with repairs and renovations I had not foreseen. Despite the complications, I was enjoying the fact that I had bought the house by myself, needing no significant other’s income to help me qualify. For the first time, I was not sharing space with roommates or relatives. I had no plans to ruin that with marriage. “Besides, I just bought my first house,” I told him. “One adult step at a time.”

I didn’t tell him the real reason, that although I had not known him the first eleven years of my life, and though we had called a tenuous truce long ago, he had still managed to scar me. Seeing the damage one man could inflict had made me cautious. My grandfather’s abandonment—his nonchalant justification for his behavior—had embedded itself into my skin, running deep as pores. Though I told myself I forgave him, his words were there behind every impossible test to which I subjected my prospective lovers, every hurdle over which I forced them to leap. The hurt he’d caused prompted my scrutiny of the men
I dated, made me look for that elusive thing, that invisible yet telltale sign, that signal that proclaimed the man akin to my grandfather. I would not be as foolish as my grandmother, believing simply in love and marriage, assuming that a man who fathered children would naturally love and want them.

When the couple seated to my left went to the open bar, my grandfather leaned across the table, his elbow dislodging a pat of butter from its dish. “Chalí says he’s not going to play anything by him.” My grandfather announced this as if it were a personal affront, something his son had done just out of spite.

The summer I’d stayed with them, Chalí had stayed mostly locked behind his bedroom door, practicing to be a deejay. I’d heard only the thrumming base of hip-hop blaring from his room as he played Run DMC and Big Daddy Kane. He’d never shown any interest in salsa. “Did you expect him to?”

“He could have just played one or two songs,” he said. “He could have done it for me.” My grandfather waved his weathered hand dismissively over the table’s centerpiece. “Says he don’t want nothing in Spanish. What are they playing now, nena? Do you know it?”

The deejay was playing a hit song from a popular all-girl group’s second album. The song was meant for dance clubs and gym workouts. I was guilty of listening to it while on my elliptical machine. The lyrics castigated deadbeat men who indiscriminately accumulated bills and took advantage of their girlfriends. The song would have made an English teacher wince with the way it ignored the rules of grammar, but no one cared about that kind of thing nowadays. The song had been penned by the group’s lead singer, a beauty whose father managed the group and who was rumored to soon be going solo. I pointed to all of the couples and singles who had risen from their tables and now crowded the dance floor. “They play this group on the radio all the time. Everybody likes them. They’ve won a Grammy.”

“They must hand them out like chicles now. Look at all the beautiful songs Héctor had and how many albums it took him before he even got nominated. 1991,” he said, refusing to concede. “Ay, nena, if Héctor
Lavoe could see me now. I have a son getting married, a granddaughter who owns her own house. Bought it herself, with nobody’s help. Yes, I am man to be proud. Your house, it has many rooms?”

“It’s no mansion,” I said.

“I bet it’s real nice.”

I withdrew my wallet from my purse. “I have pictures.”

“Other people put pictures of their kids in here,” my grandfather chided, leaning closer to see the photos.

“One thing at a time,” I said, ignoring the pointed criticism. I reminded myself that we had made our peace.

Years after I’d hung up on him, my grandfather had called to tell me about Tito Puente and El Conde’s deaths six months apart. Then he’d sent me a cassette tape of all the songs we’d listened to together during the summer I’d visited. Listening to the tape of carefully selected songs, I’d remembered those nights as the closest we’d ever been. When he took the time to explain the music to me, I could not hate him. With the music between us, I could almost forget that he was the man who should have been in Brooklyn with us but had abandoned us and had a whole other family who got all of his time, care, and attention. Listening to the tape had reminded me that he was the only grandparent I had left, so I’d chosen to think of it as a peace offering, knowing an apology would never come from his mouth because if my grandfather had been the kind of man given to admitting his faults, no apology would have ever been needed.

“It’s a fixer-upper,” I said, showing him two pictures of the house.

My home was in West Philadelphia, in a neighborhood of row houses and Victorian twins and streets named after trees: Chestnut, Walnut, Locust, Pine, Spruce, and Cedar. I had a three-bedroom home in the middle of a block lined with trees and hedges. After college, I’d moved to Philadelphia because it seemed to me a more affordable version of New York, smaller but just as gray and loud and dirty and bustling.

Initially, I’d taken the before and after pictures in preparation of a new appraisal, but the pictures found their way into my wallet and remained. I liked knowing they were there.
The first picture was taken right after purchase, the second after I'd removed the carpet and made a few improvements. It was not a costly house; the mortgage was cheaper than my previous rent had been. There was no central air, no dishwasher, no modernity. The cabinets in the kitchen were old and darkened wood, too high above the counters. The kitchen windows had to be propped up in order to stay open. The walls were white-paneled wood. The basement was unfinished. The floors on the lower level were hardwood, and there were lighter streaks in the middle of the floor where the sun had bleached the wood. When I'd first moved in, the lower floor and stairs had been covered in green shag carpet that it had taken me four days to pull up. Knowing no better, I'd used the claw edge of a hammer to pry the carpet from the edges and bang down the nails and a box cutter for sections that became too unwieldy to roll. I hadn't thought about hiring someone to do the grunt work for me. I did the things I could do myself and made weekly trips to Home Depot. It hadn't occurred me to rely upon anyone other than myself.

"This is my favorite room," I said, showing him the “after” picture of my enclosed porch. “This is where I spend most of my time.” I kept my books there, an armchair, umbrellas and phonebooks, and near-dying plants. I'd come into the house, pick up the mail, and sit in my armchair with my music and my work. In my living room, there was no television, only a stereo, a vintage record player, a pair of surround-sound speakers, and an entertainment center to hold all of the music. I would put on a rotation of CDs and listen to the music from where I sat in the enclosed porch, sitting there until the night became too dark or cold. It was like being in the house yet not in the house, and being outside yet not outside. Sitting in my armchair in the enclosed porch, I could hear the street outside, my neighbor’s fourteen-year-old daughter bossing her friends and minding her little brother, cars passing. From where I sat in the enclosed porch, my house looked like an opportunity, as if everything was waiting to be done. I could see how much I’d already accomplished, how far I still had to go. It made me feel unlimited.

My grandfather took my wallet and held it in his hands, his elbow next to mine. In the distance, his second wife was signaling him to
rejoin her and he was pointedly ignoring her beckoning hand. He flipped through the plastic sleeves slowly, carefully, looking at each one. He turned to me. “I can see you here,” he said, examining me closely.

_The last call_ came tonight, while I was lying in bed beside a man I knew I would not marry.

The phone rang on the night stand closest to him.

“Hand it to me,” I said when he seemed inclined to answer it. He lifted the cordless phone from its base and reached across our torsos to comply.

The phone’s small screen revealed a 787 area code, a call from Puerto Rico, a call I assumed was from my grandfather to tell me another singer had died.

I clicked the talk button and Titi Cristina’s voice came across clear and sad. “Your abuelo’s gone,” my grandfather’s youngest daughter said. I listened as she told me of the heart failure that had taken his life. I promised her I would let my family know. Lying there, beside the man I knew I would never marry, I held myself still and tried to gather myself in, but before I knew it, I was crying.

“What’s happened?” he asked.

“Someone very close to me died,” I said, wiping my eyes. “I just found out.”

He shifted under the covers and rose to a sitting position. “Who was it?”

“Someone very close to me,” I repeated, failing to see how the specifics of idle curiosity preempted an offer of sympathy.

“I hope it wasn’t your mom.”

“No,” I said, believing I’d supplied enough information.

He continued to stare at me as I cried. Finally he said, “I’m sorry to hear that.”

“Thank you,” I said. “I’d really appreciate it if you could leave.”

After locking the door behind the man I knew I would never marry, I settled in my living room. I’d call my mother and my uncles in the morning and give them the news. I searched the drawers of my entertainment center for the handful of cassette tapes I still owned.
When I found them, I spread them out on the couch and searched until I found the one I wanted. I found the tape my grandfather had made me, pushed it into the tape deck and pressed play. I opened the door between my enclosed porch and my living room and sank into my armchair where I could hear both the music and the night.

ON MY LAST night in Puerto Rico, my grandfather called me into the living room. He said to me, “This is what you didn’t hear.”

He put on a record and positioned the two speakers on the floor so that they turned more fully toward us. “He would have sung this if they hadn’t stopped him, but they didn’t give him the chance.” My grandfather’s joy at attending the performance had been cut short when the concert ended abruptly. One minute, we could hear Héctor singing, and the next, the power on the stage had been shut off.

The song was slow to start. It began as if it were in a jungle or a forest, with the sounds of birds cawing, chirping, tittering, and screeching. Elephants trumpeted. In the distance, drums spoke and voices chanted, putting me in the mind of what I guessed African music sounded like. The song went on like this, growing without words. Then the horns kicked in, followed by a man’s voice singing one lone word, stretching it to its limit, repeating it and pulling everything and more from the word he sang over and over. Without warning, drums rolled and all the instruments seemed to come in at once. I’d never heard any kind of song like it. Beneath the familiar instruments, I heard the sound of one I didn’t know, a clanging like that of the small noisemakers sold on New Year’s Eve. My grandfather identified it as the clave, the key, the rhythm, the heartbeat of all salsa.

The drums drove the beating of my heart. Seated on the floor in front of the couch, I felt that I was moving. My grandfather crouched beside the record player, eyes closed, beating the clave’s rhythm against his leg. I feared the song would end, yet hoped it never would. I wanted the song to play, the drums to roll on and on. I picked up the album cover and stared at the man with the wide lapels and at the wide lenses of his tinted sunglasses. The day after we went to hear him, the singer jumped or fell from his hotel balcony’s window. My grandfather kept
silent vigil until he knew the singer would live, allowing no one to so much as even turn on the radio. Demons, my grandfather had said the singer had demons. When I listened to “Aguanile” that night, I knew what he meant. The chant of the song provided the means to chase the demons all away. I wondered if I had demons too, ghosts that needed expunging, and knew that we—both my grandfather and I—had our own ghosts that haunted us. It wasn’t about me at all. He needed me to absolve himself. I was merely the youngest from that side of the family, the safest conduit. My mother and uncles, his first children, were too old and bitter to ever make their peace with him. What he didn’t give to them, he’d tried to pass on to me. He was using me to get through to them and—that night—I allowed myself to be used.

“It’s too bad they stopped him,” my grandfather said. “I wish you could have heard this song on the stage.” That night, in spite of everything, I wished it too.