

Kitchen

I am in my grandma's kitchen. She does not go by grandma due to her own negative associations to the title, rather we've grown up calling her grandmother. It is in this kitchen that I've made many fond memories. Memories built between just me and grandmother when I lived there, memories with my cousin Cole, and memories built with the entire family.

It is here that I've bonked my head against the sharp corner of the poorly made cabinets that hang much too low from the ceiling, suspended over the countertop in the most '70s of ways. They never quite shut right, and they squeak and groan whenever you open them. The fake wood designed plastic cover that is over all the particle board is peeling at the corners and on the edges. In some cases, it's simply been worn down, sanded away through decades of snack runs and grocery stocks. Grandmother has always been so proud of them, proud that Grandad alongside her father built them from scratch and how they've lasted all these generations. When some are opened, you'll find piles of expired food and a curious smell to say hello. Others reveal a carefully organized and managed array of kitchen supplies, be it glassware or the knives.

Then, in the middle of it all, up against the window with that epic view of Squaw Peak is her faucet. The greatest kitchen sink faucet that ever did exist. I remember when they installed it, back when I was about eight or nine. I don't remember what it had been before, but I do remember pausing to myself even at that young age and thinking, "Wow, now that's a good faucet." Stainless steel, plain, incredibly simple and possibly benign, it is without any branding or naming at all, yet it delivers the perfect stream. And with water pressure straight from Niagara Falls at times it can be a touch too powerful as it'll hit a spoon at full force and drench the whole countertop. The cherry on top of it all. The underappreciated and unsung hero of any kitchen: a

strong, steady, fluid, uninterrupted faucet stream. And in all my years, I've still never found a better one.

Then finally, up against the wall and impossible to miss, there is the most unpredictable stove that General Electric ever built. You could cook eggs in the same pan, on the same heater that's turned to the same heat, day after day, and you will never have the same cooking experience. Sometimes "medium" on the dial will turn the stove top into one of the panels on the outside of a rocket that's reentering the atmosphere, glowing bright orange, and other times it's about as warm as if it rubbed my palms back and forth beneath them attempting to create enough heat to even be noticed. An aged and storied cream color shows the impressive number of family dinners it has facilitated with burn marks and melted plastic on the corners, it wobbles on its corners and keeps you on your toes.

In a kitchen that's been full of almost every kind of smell, texture, color, and sight you can imagine, it is these three things that seem to sing the song of my grandmother's kitchen loudest. They do not quit. They do not change. The faucet is a new addition relative to the house's erection, but it's been there as long as I've been aware. Even though the corner of that cupboard can make your head sting like hell, the stove is about as predictable as a crack addict with no crack, and the faucet can make it rain indoors, I wouldn't change a thing and it's this kitchen's song that I hold so dear.