

Don't Be Give Up

When I was a child I loved my Grandpa's calmness. He never called me lazy. My favorite time with him was when he held me in the rocking chair and sang Yugoslavia songs.

But in December 1941 Grandpa had little time for my sisters and me, hushing us, his face somber and worried, as he listened to the news of Hitler marching unchecked over the face of Europe. America was at war. On December 7 the Japs attacked Pearl Harbor and his favorite son, Johnny, had just been drafted into the army.

Grandpa lay ill with pneumonia and grief sapping his strength because his favorite sister, Mary, her husband George and their youngest son, Bobby, had been killed in a car accident. Grandpa was a strong man, braving below zero temperatures to work in the coal mine, but there is a limit to even a strong man's endurance.

Maybe that's why Mama let us visit him as often as we wanted when I was almost six.