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Uncle Pete

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Each time I visit here
I lay my rock down next
To the rock that marks where
You lie
making my own Wailing Wall
remembering your little nuances.

The one I remember most is the smile
That always spread across your face
even in the end.

Yesterday your sister showed me
the pictures of Auschwitz
that you took during the War.
You wrote back telling of the
Horrors you’d seen.

You always liked to remind us of our fortune,
how our family escaped that
madness.
Today I looked at the picture
of you and me

me grabbing for
a cookie out of the jar. You held
me in arms that were juxtaposed
perfectly to my fat stubs.

Skeletal
like the prisoners pictures with one extra addition
that smile.

By this time you’d been fighting
your own battles
completely different from the Second World War.
Chemicals
Flowing into and out of your system
supposedly killing the disease.
When you finally lost, people
lined up past the entrance to Temple
Beth El paying their respects.

Mom still has the fern you gave
Her to plant in our front yard
And each year it blooms we sigh,
laugh, and think of you.
Knowing your spirit is still here.