



Grandmother's Gift

It was at the end of the fifties, and I was about four years old. I was out of the house on the paved road where every day I met my friends who were of the same age, to play. In those years the greatest danger in the streets were the flocks of sheep, which crossed the country roads to go from one pasture to another. For us children it was fun to watch them pass, but it was more fun playing with the balls of excrement left by them on the road. Another game we enjoyed was racing with our metal tricycles. Plastic did not exist yet; neither did the telephone, television, cell phones, nor computers. However, these things did not matter, especially for us children, as we were filled with the abundant joy of living.

It was on one of those days, as we played outside, that someone returning home told me that my parents had gone out to my maternal grandmother's funeral, and that I was not to worry because they would soon be back. I didn't understand what the word "funeral" meant. This was my first experience with death. As soon as my parents returned, I immediately asked them. They explained that my grandmother had died, and I realized from that day on that I would never see my grandmother again. Thus, began a life-long search for the meaning and nature of the mysterious event in a person's life called "death." What is strange and paradoxical is that in trying to find a reason for the existence of death, I found instead a reason for the continuity of life.

Many years have passed, but that child in me has never changed, and his innocence is preserved in an artist's heart. The only thing he wants is a new metal tricycle.