

The Sick Cup

The Sick cup rests upon a wooden shelf. The ornate mug is an apricot color, glassy, iridescent and when the sun beats down through the window, a green hue is exposed through the ceramic shelling. The Sick Cup heals my family both physically and spiritually. It holds broth, Tamiflu, tea, and any other liquid that is essential for wellness. Spiritually, the cracks from the kiln allow bits of tenderness from my family to enter me. When one falls ill, they are vulnerable, perhaps, they are in their most vulnerable state. The Sick Cup was a name coined by my great grandmother Helen; dating back three generations, each of my family members has rested their lips upon the small mug. I remember being a small child and glancing upon the cup, it held magic in it. The smoothness of the cup mixed with the warm beverage it held inside brought a familiar warmness to my face and my throat, making me feel safe and well. I placed all well being toward my family's Sick Cup.

One summer, I was desperately ill and when the salty chicken broth became filled to the brim, I expected relief. To my surprise, all I felt was a hot liquid burning the back of my throat and a throbbing sensation as my tonsils clenched. Did the Sick Cup no longer possess healing magic? Modern medicine would have me believe it never had.

As time passed, the unique mug caught my attention and I remembered the nostalgic memories I have had with it. I had realized the Sick Cup was magical because it showed all the love that my family had for one another. For generations, mothers filled the cup to provide wellness to their children. Each time my little hands grasped it, it had been the exact format that my mom's did, my grandma did and my great-grandma did. The mug contained the virtue of

fortitude and putting effort into their kin's wellness. As a child, I was encompassed with so much warmth and love all the time. I was so wealthy in knowing that people loved me and was provided the luxury of being in a nurturing household. As time has passed and I reflect, I've seen the motif of the Sick Cup in many aspects of my life. Some examples include: my sage green easter baskets, miniature Christmas Carol decorations, and my communion candle, all forms of the sick cup in different fonts .

Throughout youth, I had always associated nostalgic memories with inanimate objects. Throughout my development into womanhood however, I associate every nostalgic memory with a sacrifice. The women in my family were not able to create a tradition of caring for each other without sacrifice. Personal relaxation and comfort were constantly set to the side in order to care for their children.

One day, the Sick Cup will rest upon a shelf in my home. I will ensure it rests tilted toward a natural light source, in order for the green hues to be exposed. There will come a day when I clutch that cup, not to drink from it; simply to pour a beverage into it. I will walk slowly yet, with confidence, just as my mother did. The mug is warm, hot even, i carefully hand the mug to small hands. The small hands reach for the mug, grasping it, but not firmly. I do not let go until I am sure a strong grip is placed firmly around the cup's curved handles. I step back and I take notice of the steam rising up and up, touching the child's upper lip. In that moment, I am my mother, and every other woman before me.