Just Love

Ramusu Kamara

Denison University

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There was a smile on my father’s face as he looked at me and me looking past him to whatever lies beyond the barriers of that shot. Both arms gently caging me letting myself live in them. To him, it must’ve felt as if I was not just a baby but a reward from a hunt meant to be presented to the world by capturing it in photo. I heard his firing laughter as my mother said cheese completing the moment.

His hands not only held but shared. Subdued notes of affection towards me. They chased my words to make little corrections on homework that my hands gave to yours. They must’ve anxiously wrote notes for the exam that caused him to miss my hands that played the violin you gave to me with promise. They could’ve tightly held the phone as mine did while trapping my words with something called love.

My father wouldn’t have been able to imagine me becoming much bigger than his arms. To somehow furiously spring out of them. To crawl to walk to run run run. When I am again captured just in photo, side by side we sit gently leaning into each other for just a moment. Afterward, we part, but before I do, I can feel the lingering touch of his hesitate before letting go of what he calls just love.