Wilderness House Literary Review 13/2

Karen Schauber 'Grandpa's Not Feeling Well'

Grandpa has been sighing a lot lately. He sits at the kitchen table tap tapping the checkered cloth, twisting salt and pepper shakers, brushing off non-existent crumbs, trying to make things right.

Grandma makes tea, lets the bag float till the water turns crusty. He doesn't touch it.

The news is on all day now. Times have changed he keeps saying. Grandma can't console him. If only he was younger he says. He would do something.

His vacant stare lets me know he is listening intently to the reports. I don't dare interrupt. He's told me he can't miss a thing; that it can change from minute to minute. There is no telling what can happen. He whispers 'no one will be safe'.

The lump in my throat does not want to go away. I can feel his pain, his deep disappointment. His worry.

I have never seen my Grampa like this before. I can't tell if he's aging before my eyes, going downhill fast, or what.

I look at Grandma hoping she can do something. Maybe she knows what he needs. She is starting to sigh too. I'm not sure if it's because of what is happening with Grandpa or if it's about what Grampa is so upset about.

I pretend to do my homework, but I am really too distracted to study. I am starting to sigh too. It's all very unpleasant, even a little scary. It feels like my family has been taken hostage, but I can't figure out by who.

He keeps repeating 'I feel the Bern' but it doesn't seem to be changing the situation. I'll keep watching, and waiting, with him.