*Write a story titled ‘The Holiday’*

**The Holiday**

Her face, like a sculpted piece of art, was motionless. Fine dust layered in the gentle crevasses carved into the canvas that was her bleached skin, and the drained rosy hue of her parted lips was no longer the result of a pale-tinted lipstick. On her head, sparse, gentle waves parted slightly left of the middle and brushed to the side with meticulous precision, seamlessly blended with the pristine pillowcase bearing the tiny weight. The gown, although soft and washed with exhaustive care, hung on her fragile limbs. It sunk her figure into the bed, a burden on the chest. Stitched to the sleeve was a cream label with the words ‘Hement Care Home’. The rounded words vanishing. Through the battles they faded: the immense effort required at mealtimes; the attention of reading; and silence of the night keeping her awake. Below the lined forehead, the blank interior, like a hollowed shell, was unable to order the body to move. She was unable to lift her finger: it seemed to her as some fanciful task or magical ability.

A knock on the door and a young chap burst in. A bubble of joy.

“Guess whooo…” he uttered, with a mile-wide smile that was a miracle given the bucket of stress balancing on his head. Her eyes drifted to the door with a barely identifiable twitch in her face that curled her lips slightly upward in an excruciating motion. She felt a soft kiss at her forehead and then his words drifted away as she listened in subconsciously. He pointed out the tulips sitting so mournfully by the windowpane. They were red and yellow intermingled in an eruption of green. He remembered a time, a time that the old woman could not remember. Help me remember, she thought, and as if he read her mind, the son began like a father with some wonderful, enchanting tale. The holiday:

It was a beautiful Spring that year. In the car, he drove with his 9-year-old son in the backseat, who was explaining away to grandma in that passionate way of his, explaining his thoughts on how they should go about their day.

“You see,” he would say, “we really should get settled in first, then go straight to the pool, and have dinner after that,” he exclaimed, “cause eating before swimming, is really not a very good idea!” he added in a factual remark as they were approaching the ‘White Pillar Family Spa Resort’.

During a quick break to get a breath of fresh air, they stopped at a church, very small, and almost a chapel. There was no service or no people, yet it had the most unusual lively tone that flooded from the forest surrounding it, while the three wondered around the building. It was still February, yet there were these new-born tulips scattered wildly between weeds and uncut grass. The red ones had cream-yellow tips that dipped down in gentle spikes as if into a rich red paint. Bees zoomed like traffic, making stops at every flower to taste their glorious nectar, buzzing back-and-forth as if to make sure that every last drop was consumed.

In the care home, darts of pastel sunshine emanated from the window and lighted the vase in a natural spotlight of attention. The old woman’s eyelids drooped closed as she attempted to remember this now-fictional memory and simultaneously readied herself for the challenges to come tomorrow.