





# Saying Goodbye

My grandfather had an underlying condition, but that doesn't mean it hurt any less when he passed away from the coronavirus.

BY JESS FELDMAN

**I**t was a Tuesday afternoon when my dad sat down with my mom, brother and me to tell us that my grandfather—a once brave, confident man who had been suffering from Alzheimer's disease for the past eight years—had contracted COVID-19. In a very matter-of-fact manner, as if he'd been preparing for this moment, my dad let us know that our Dulia (a nickname my brother and I gave my grandfather when we were little) was expected to die by the following Monday.

When those words fell from his lips I immediately thought about my favorite person, my grandmother, nicknamed Bulia. Since my grandpa moved into a rehabilitation center nearly a decade ago, Bulia dedicated her life to keeping him healthy. From getting her driver's license reinstated at age 80 in order to visit him every day to micromanaging his attentive nurses, Dulia was her top priority, her day job, her purpose.

Yet when the coronavirus made its way to Massachusetts in March, my strong, Russian, go-getter grandma was told she had to stop visiting for his safety. And now, a month later, another sickness for which there is no cure had gotten to him and there was nothing she could do about it. None of us could. When Northern Virginia, like much of the country, issued stay-at-home orders, I decamped from my house in Arlington to my childhood home in Massachusetts, where I could be close to my family and, it turned out, help my Bulia through her grief.

I knew the statistics: By May, more than 90,000 people had died of the virus in the U.S. But, despite this knowledge, I didn't realize the depth of power and uncertainty surrounding this invisible killer until we heard the facts directly from my grandpa's doctors. "I have to be honest with you," one said. "We don't know how to help him, but we will make him

as comfortable as we can."

On April 27, just as the doctors predicted, my grandpa passed away. He was 86, had a preexisting health condition and couldn't walk on his own when the virus made its way into his lungs. Simply put, his body was a magnet for this unexplainable sickness that creeps into the body like fog rolling over the sea on a summer morning—distant at first and then impossible to avoid.

We didn't get to sit shiva after his death, a time where family and friends bring food to the home as a grieving ritual per Jewish tradition. We weren't there by his bedside to say goodbye. We didn't get to hug my grandmother the second she found out the man she had been devoted to for 59 years was gone.

Yet, in those final days before he passed, my family and I had time to come to terms with death, a rarity for most. Each night, the five of us sat around the kitchen table (with Bulia on FaceTime), looking at photos of pre-Alzheimer's Dulia—the guy who had the guts to propose to a woman after knowing her for just two days. For the first time in my life, my dad, who rarely opens up about his past, was telling stories about his childhood in Moscow and Dulia's ability to gain the respect of diplomatic leaders with ease.

There are very few things we can control in this life—Alzheimer's disease, the toll of the coronavirus, heartbreak from loss—but I've learned how we approach each situation is always a choice. As seven family members stood under a cherry blossom tree on a sunny day in New England for a pseudo funeral—the only gathering that was allowed with safety restrictions in place—I chose to see the good in that moment: the pink petals flowing through the wind as the rabbi said my grandfather's name, the blue jays chirping almost in sync with the sound of my grandma's tears. These are things I don't think I would have noticed months ago. The coronavirus took my grandfather and I saw firsthand how this disease is wreaking havoc on families. But, that day, at an intimate funeral I wouldn't have previously pictured for my Dulia, I felt lucky that I was able to clasp my grandma's latex-covered hand and see her bright blue eyes above a face mask. None of it was normal, but as my grandpa was laid to rest I could feel Bulia's body let out a deep sigh, as if she had been holding it in for years. At that moment, I knew we'd all be OK.





BEAUTY BUZZ

# Au Naturel

A Parisian mom living in Arlington is sharing her French skin care secrets with the launch of a DIY beauty company.

BY JESS FELDMAN

**W**HEN ELODIE CALLY AND HER HUSBAND MADE THE decision to move to Northern Virginia from their home in Paris, they had everything planned out: the job, the house, the lifestyle—it was foolproof. That was until she discovered she was pregnant the same day they were putting their entire life into a truck to be shipped across the globe. “There was no going back,” recalls Cally.

Once settled into her new digs in Arlington, Cally set out to find all-natural skin care products that would benefit both her and her baby. However, something that was once easy to locate in her hometown now seemed nonexistent stateside.

“I discovered that you can basically make anything from anywhere in the U.S.—there’s no FDA approval necessary,” says Cally. “You can use the words ‘natural’ or ‘organic’ and there is no worth to the definition, which I thought was very scary.”

That was nearly three years ago. Today—after receiving a degree in cosmetic formulation from Paris and perfecting her recipes—Cally owns Elodie’s Naturals, a cosmetic company that doubles as a DIY skin care formulation class, where the students decide exactly what goes on their skin, with guidance from Cally. Conforming to standards of the European Union, Cally uses no more than 15 plant-based ingredients in each product. These include aromas created from a natural blend of essential oils and pigments (for lip gloss and lipstick) extracted from foods like beet root and sweet potatoes.

From her own Arlington kitchen, Cally teaches groups of eight to 10 individuals how to make natural products like facial serum, hair conditioner and lip moisturizer. With small class sizes, Cally can customize each product to the individual by altering the active ingredients. The skin of a teenager, for example, would require a different level of essential oil than that of a new mother.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTIN BOGGS PETER



#### About Face

Elodie Cally teaches DIY skin care classes out of her gorgeous kitchen in Arlington. Products include reusable makeup remover pads (top left) and her own line of natural beauty products (bottom left).



"Most people who come to my class are moms, expecting mothers or women who've had experience with cancer; they are people who are very concerned about what goes on their skin," explains Cally. "Now they can see the process and understand exactly what they are putting on their bodies."

In March, Cally expanded her concept to include an online shop where customers can purchase her homemade cleansing balm, two facial serums and dry oil body spray, as well as eco-friendly accessories like reusable makeup remover pads. Former workshop participants can also restock their self-designed beauty products online.

On the horizon, Cally hopes to offer sip-and-design classes, open a brick-and-mortar beauty boutique and start a YouTube channel for beauty mavens not in NoVA. All of her ideas, she says, are inspired by the desire to keep her daughter's (now 3) skin healthy.

"She's the reason I'm doing this, even though she corrects my English now," Cally says with a laugh. // [elodiesnaturals.com](http://elodiesnaturals.com)



