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## At Rest

**Kathryn Ann Miller**

It happens gradually because you are busy. You are working very hard every minute of the day. Your day runner has events marked through every day. You are always running. Young lives are dependent on you. Nights are filled with household chores that can't be done during the day because you work. Time for yourself does not exist and gradually, you begin to feel tired.

The fatigue that began slowly takes hold of you and affects your thinking. You're not as quick as you once were. Your ideas are old. There are too many acronyms for new procedures and it's harder to produce an IEP ASAP. Your young associates are respectful, but you overhear them complaining about your habit of saying, "We used to . . ." You realize how dated you are. The decision must be made and with a heavy heart, you make it.

There is a party to thank you for your faithful service. You cry and receive hugs and promises to "keep in touch" and then it's time to leave. You walk out of the door with your arms full of 44 years of lesson plan notebooks, countless apple pens and pencils, apple picture frames, apple candles, apple magnets, apple paper weights, apple notepads, apple mugs, apple water bottles, apple inspirational plaques and apple totes. No one wants your dated bulletin board supplies, so you toss them on your way out.

It's quiet when you arrive home. You plop your bounty in the foyer and fall into a recliner. The people who made noises and messes have moved away from home. You think you should be sad, and you will be, but later. Now, you're just tired.

You check your iPhone calendar that replaced your day runner years ago. The days are empty with the exception of ophthalmologist and dental appointments. Nothing pending today. While you're on your phone you catch up on Facebook. You ask yourself why people post so many animal videos, but then you watch a dog trying to reach a bag of Oreos from a kitchen counter and you laugh despite yourself. This is not who you are, so you put your phone away.

You haven't watched TV for years, but you turn it on anyway. You click through the guide and finally decide on the news. Is it your imagination or does every newswoman wear her hair parted in the middle like Elsa and Anna? You lived in second grade too long.

Your back and shoulders ache so you lean back in the recliner. You notice that your once long thin legs are now full and lined with veins. You rub your bent arthritic fingers across your wrinkled forehead. You are so tired. You close your eyes for just a minute.

You wake up hours later in a dark house. You should eat something, but a glass of pinot noir sounds lovely. You think about getting up and turning on the radio, but its easier to tell Alexa to play Carole King, and she complies. She also turns on the lamp on the table next to your chair. She may be your new best friend.

Suddenly, you smile! For the first time that you can remember, you won't set an alarm. You can have another glass of wine. You can sleep in your clothes in the recliner. You are the boss of you! You deserve this rest. It's all for you. Embrace it. You will feel sad, but not yet. Close your eyes.