

“Gram” is an excerpt from the play, The Traveler, by Ken Bradbury and Robert L. Crowe. © granted 1999 by the Library of Congress to the Consortium Publishing Company.  
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## #112 - GRAM

by  
Robert L. Crowe



*(the scene is a hospital room. A frail old woman is lying in a bed with tubes attached to all parts of her body. Her eyes are closed. A young girl enters.)*

### The Author

#### Robert L. Crowe

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Gram? Gram? Can you hear me? It’s me, \_\_\_\_\_ . I wanted to stay and visit, but the nurse says I can only be in here a few minutes. I hope you can hear me. I can’t tell if you can or not. I saw in a movie once that there was this undercover spy in the hospital who couldn’t talk, so he moved his hand when he meant “yes.” I guess we don’t need any code, though. But I do hope you can hear me. I got something I gotta say. Even if you can’t hear me, I gotta say it anyway.

The nurse told me that you weren’t in any pain. That’s good to hear ‘cause all those tubes sticking in you sure looks pretty bad. I guess you don’t like it very much either, even though it’s supposed to be good for you.

Well, like I said, I have something I want to tell you. I started to practice what I was going to say but it didn’t come out very well, so I hope I do better now.

I never told you ... I never even *tried* to tell you ... that I love you for everything you have done for me in my life. Yeh, I know I said the words when you bought me something, or took me someplace but I never did give you the feelings from deep down inside me. I hope you

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knew ... I hope you *know* ... how I really feel about you. You gave *me* all the love you had and I gave you back a few “thank yous” before I went quickly on my way. You know the new dress you gave me on my birthday? I wore it to school and everybody admired me and told me how pretty it was. I was really proud of how I looked, just like I had done something wonderful. All the time I should have been thinking of how hard you worked to save up to buy it for me and how much it meant for you to see me happy.

And I’ll never forget that you kept my secrets and didn’t tell mom. Maybe those were small secrets and didn’t seem very important to you but they were our secrets and you never, ever told anyone. Even my best friends won’t do that for me.

I guess the thing that I’m ashamed of most is that I didn’t come to visit you very often. I could have come to see you more than I did. I said I was busy but I wasn’t, not really. There were other things that I wanted to do and I thought they’d be more fun than sitting around talking. Mom asked me to go along with her a lot and I could have said yes, but I didn’t ... at least not very often. I know you wanted to see me, even just for a few minutes.

That’s what I came to say today. I came to ask you to forgive me. You gave me all your love and I repaid you by being too busy to talk to you.

A part of it is that I never really understood the ... I never really understood that it wouldn’t last forever. I thought that you would always be there, and I would always have the chance to visit with you later. And I thought that I could make it up to you when I got older.

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When mom told me that you ... may not get well, I cried, and I promised myself I wouldn’t do that when I came to see you but when mom told me I suddenly realized that I took your love, and I didn’t give much back.

I didn’t know you would be asleep, or wouldn’t be able to talk. I thought I’d get to tell you this so you would know, and you would tell me it was OK, and I wouldn’t have to go through my whole life being sorry. I don’t know what to do now. Oh, I do wish you could hear me. (*emotional but restrained*) Wait! Did I see that right? Did you move your hand? Did you? Can you do it again? You did! You did move your hand for me. You can hear me can’t you! Oh, Gram, I’m sorry that you can’t talk to me right now but it means everything in the world to me that you heard me, and you know.

Oh ... Oh ... the nurse is motioning to me. My few minutes are up. I’ll come back to visit you. I promise. I’ll visit you all the time if you get well. Bye for now. And Gram ... (*squeezes her hand as her grandmother must have done*) I love you forever! (*exits*)

End