

# What Kira Sees

*On the shelf where we kept our  
photo albums there was a book my  
Mom called The Family Book of  
the Dead.*



*Among its dozen or so  
pages were the faces  
of those we'd lost along  
the way...*

*There was my grandfather's  
older brother, Del, who was  
run over by a car in 1922,  
at age eleven.*



*And the twins, Wendy and  
Gwendy, who would have been  
my fourth cousins twice  
removed. They died in the  
influenza pandemic of 1918.*



*My great-great-granduncle,  
Philo, had moved West in the  
late 1800s and been killed by  
bandits on the road.*



*Once when my father was drunk, he  
told me Philo had actually been hung as  
a horse thief, but he denied it later.*

My Grandpa Jimmy had survived Korea, but his helicopter went down in the early days of the Vietnam War.



A few years after that Mom's brother, my uncle Jack, fell from a tree and fractured his collarbone. The fracture got infected and he died before the doctors even knew he was in danger.

And of course, my dad, who had died of pancreatic cancer when I was sixteen. Mom got mad at me when I put his picture in the book.



She said I was "missing the point" and I said she didn't want to be reminded of what she'd done to him.