



The Last Time

**Story by: Jeremy Janiak, Assistant Director
University Centers
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire**

Little did I know that January 2020 would be the last time that I would see both of you.

The US had just confirmed its first case of COVID, I paid little attention to the news, it would go away, we live in the Midwest where nothing happens.

Our visit was good, I wished both of you the best and promised to visit again, as soon as I could.

Time slips by.... faster than we want it too. COVID was in the news more, but I still did not pay too much attention.

More time slips by.... I received a call today; your assisted living would no longer accept visitors.

I called to see how you were, you were bored, wanted to get out.

I called every couple of weeks, our conversations were almost a repeat each time, brief, but we still talked.

Even more time slips by.... It is somehow now July 2020. I received a call today, one of you are failing in health, your assisted living was allowing limited visitors – due to the circumstances.

I came down as soon as I could, they made us take our temperatures, put on a gown, wear face masks and gloves. We all had to stay apart. The visit was heartbreaking, I said my goodbyes.

This was the last time that I saw you.

I receive a phone call a couple days later, one of you was gone.

I tried to increase my calls; the conversations were still short. How many times can you say that you are sorry, how do you help someone grieve when they are alone?

It is now October 2020; I called you on a Sunday night, how could I know that this was the last time we would speak?

You said that you were not feeling well, I told you to take care of yourself and get some rest.

I received a call on Wednesday. You were gone.

How could I know?

**Artist: Joshua Brown, Professor
Department of Languages
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire**

Joshua is a professor of German and linguistics at UW-Eau Claire, and he is also a weaver and needleworker with a focus on historical forms of folk art. His textile website is <https://www.ullfrogintextiles.com/>.

For this project, I wove fabric for three stories and embroidered a recurring motif from each one using blackwork embroidery techniques. I then replicated the loss, fear, and disruption from each story by cutting the fabric into pieces. I then sewed the pieces together with visible seams and in an irregular pattern – reminiscent of 19th century piecework textiles. I was struck by these stories of loss and fear in our own UWEC community – we don't often know about the very real struggles of our coworkers, but we need to hear those stories and work as a community to lift each other up.

View all the pieces in the *Healing Reflections* [online gallery](#).