

## **JIMBO**

**By Dylan Gallagher**

**Jim lives in Room 308 at 2555 Broadway. He is a resident of the Cooney Convalescent Home where I work. Jim has Alzheimer's disease, a broken hip and no teeth; he is beautiful.**

**Jimmy has lived through the Depression; he has experienced more hardship and lived through more troubles than I will probably ever see in my whole life. He has every reason to be mean and nasty, yet all that I have to do to make him smile is just acknowledge that he's there. All that I have to do is go up to him and give him a hearty, "Hey, Jimbo, what's up." Suddenly, no matter what kind of mood he was in before, his face lights up with that big, toothless grin and a low chuckle comes up from somewhere deep down. He is always ready to be happy, and that is beautiful.**

**Jimmy doesn't talk; I've known him for over two years now, and I've heard him talk about five times. Even though he doesn't talk, he still says more than most of the residents that won't stop talking. Jimmy doesn't have to tell me how he's doing; I can see exactly how he feels with just one look. Usually his smile shines out as he roams the halls, but sometimes, when his wheelchair gets stuck, or when he can't open a door, his eyebrows come together with just a wrinkle of skin between them, his mouth goes slack, and he runs his right hand through his short, silver hair; this means he is distraught. Other times, it looks as if his skin is just hanging from his face, like he doesn't have the energy to control his muscles; this means that he is tired. Whatever mood Jimmy is in, I knows exactly how he feels. Jimmy is simple, and that is beautiful.**

Jimmy tends to follow people around. Jimmy rolls into the dining room as I am starting to set tables. He strolls quietly behind me, never saying a word. He follows me around the big table in the middle of the dining room. When I have forgotten something back in the kitchen, and walk past Jimmy, he slowly turns around to follow me back to the kitchen door. Then I come back to where I was, and Jimmy turns right back around and keeps following. When I am done setting tables, and go back into the kitchen, Jimmy waits patiently at the door until I emerge once again. Jimmy is playful, and that is beautiful.

When I am having a bad day, and dread going to work, I just remember that Jimmy will be there. The first thing that I do after clocking in is seek Jimmy out and give him a, "What's up." He smiles and laughs, and then I smile. Then I head back to the dining room, and Jimmy follows me. Jimmy is alive, and that is beautiful.