

## Sniff Down Memory Lane

My brain is a funny machine. It doesn't archive the years in neat, chronological file folders. Instead, it locks them behind sensory triggers, waiting for a single breath to split the present wide open. I don't remember my life in dates:

*Lemon, cardamom, and saffron.*

It was home. It was the heavy warmth of my mother's kitchen on a Tuesday afternoon, the steam rising from a heavy pot while the Texas heat beat against the windowpane. It was the scent of safety, deeply steeped, before any of us knew what it meant to leave.

*Chlorine, sunscreen, and cheap watermelon lip gloss.*

It was the summer I turned ten, sunburned and fearless at the neighborhood pool. It was the smell of damp concrete towels, skinned knees, and the sudden, terrifying realization that the boys in our biology classes were looking at us differently. We spent hours doing nothing, letting our skin bake under the heavy sun, completely unaware of how fast those endless afternoons would dry up.

*Fresh rain, damp asphalt, and a crushed paper coffee cup.*

It was the morning my grandmother died. I ran out of my room hearing my mom screaming. The world smelled crisp, washed clean by a thunderstorm, wide open and terrifyingly vast. I still went to school that day.

*Vanilla, pear, and lavender.*

It was the quiet drive of the Beamer. The windows were cracked just a fraction, letting the cool night air mix with the soft, comforting scent of my boyfriend's air freshener. I watched the golden streetlights blur into long, continuous lines against the glass, caught in that fragile, teenage space between wanting to grow up and wanting to be taken care of just a little longer.

*Citrus, rose, jasmine, and warm musk.*

It was Christmas morning in 2021—the last one we all spent under that same roof. The air was a mixture of my sister's new perfume, freshly cut pine, and the heavy, sweet baseline of a holiday candle melting on the counter. We laughed too loud, trying to stretch the morning into a permanent shape, sensing the quiet countdown ticking away in the background.

*Sour cherry, bitter almond, and dark liquor.*

It was a dance competition after-party in San Diego, stumbling through a dimly lit hotel lobby at two in the morning. My feet ached from the stage lights, my hair was stiff with hairspray, and the air was thick with the electric, messy energy of college students. We felt infinite.

*Cinnamon, rose, and sweet peach wine.*

It was a horror movie night out of town, tangled in a mountain of mismatched blankets for Galentine's Day. We screamed at the jump scares, spilled popcorn onto the carpet, and talked

until our throats were dry about the futures we were building. The room smelled like cheap, sugary wine and the deep, unshakeable loyalty of female friendships.

*Cedarwood, patchouli, and sharp lychee.*

It was four in the afternoon on Newbury Street, freezing in the brutal Boston wind. I was a university student now, navigating brick sidewalks and heavy overcoats, my hands tucked deep into my pockets. It was the scent of independence—expensive boutique air mixing with the reality of an engineering degree, survival, and long nights in the library.

*Pink pepper, rich coffee, and deep cedar.*

It was the morning of my white coat ceremony. The air in the auditorium was crisp, sharp with the clean smell of a freshly ironed linen coat and the rich, dark roast I had swallowed to steady my hands. As the fabric settled onto my shoulders, the weight of the past decade settled with it. It was the scent of the person I was finally becoming—a future doctor, stepping forward, carrying every house, every city, and every ghost I had ever breathed in along the way.

#### **AI Prompt:**

Take this and structure it into a 650 word story that tells a series of life events through different scents " "Lemon, cardamom, and saffron. It was home.

Citrus, rose, jasmine, and warm musk. It was Christmas morning in 2021, the last one at home.

Vanilla, pear, and lavender. It was the backseat of the beamer.

Despair. It was the morning my grandmother died.

Sour cherry, almond, liquor. It was a dance competition after party in San Diego at 2 am.

Cinnamon, rose, and peach wine. It was a horror movie night for Galentine's out of town.

Cedarwood, patchouli, and lychee. It was 4 in the afternoon on Newbury Street in Boston.

Pink pepper, coffee, and cedar. It was the morning of my white coat ceremony.

" add more coming of age life moments in there