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I drove through the entrance gate of my apartment complex and parked my car. It had been a rough day, and I wasn't looking forward to this evening. It was my first birthday without my mom. She had died five months earlier from complications related to COPD and pneumonia.

Mom and I had always spent our birthdays together and tried to find a gift in our favorite color: cobalt blue. We'd given each other ornaments, trinkets, jewelry.... I'd even found a cobalt-blue aluminum Christmas tree one year. And on her last Thanksgiving, I'd gone to the supermarket to buy her flowers. There, among all the traditional fall-colored offerings, was a single bouquet of cobalt-blue daisies. She raved about them all day.

I sighed and slowly got out of the car. As I approached my door, I noticed a dash of color. There on the steps sat a vase filled with flowers. There was no note or birthday card with it. The flowers were beautiful, but it was the vase they came in that held my attention. It was the perfect shade of cobalt blue. **MW**

