

## **Avô, King of Pool**

*By Steve Heron*

*For Hannah*

Ana's Avô is nobody's fool.

She loves to visit him after school.

He's master of the slate and king of pool.

He taught her to play; she knows every rule.

She caught on quick and knows what to do.

How to cradle her hand and hold a cue.

Chalk the tip and spin a ball too.

Over time, her pool skills grew.

She could rack the balls for the game to begin.

Snooker, cannon, make a ball backspin.

Bounce off a cushion and make it go in.

But Avô was too good, she couldn't win.

Then something happened, and Avô began to lose.

He started forgetting his who's who's.

Didn't seem to be himself and was often confused.

One day he couldn't find his favourite shoes.

Ana noticed Avô acting strange.

He forgot some rules when they played a game.

His memory was no longer the same.

Sadly, one day he forgot her name.

'Avô is having a problem with his brain.

It's Alzheimer's', her father tried to explain.

Ana wondered if he was in pain.

She asked her dad, 'Will Avô get better again?'

'People survive the disease for many years.'

Her father said as she wiped her tears.

'It may not be as bad as it appears.'

Ana struggled with all her fears.

Avô must be going through an ordeal.

She wished it was a dream and wasn't real.

Hoping that one day he would heal.

Ana wondered how it made Grandma feel.

Sometimes she visits, asks Avô to play.

He says, 'no' and walks away.

Ana doesn't know what to say.

She wants everything to be okay.

She heads to the room out the back,  
And puts the balls in the triangle rack.  
She breaks, and Avô hears the mighty crack.  
The sound jogs some of his memories back.

She holds the cue and is terribly sad.  
Then plays a game of pool with her dad.  
She beats him because he plays bad.  
Then tells Avô, who smiles, and she's glad.

Even though he doesn't play pool any longer.  
Ana's love for Avô is stronger.  
She doesn't need any reminder.  
She keeps on visiting and is kinder.

END

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