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Creative Writing

Creative Piece.

Swim Practice

Dad was supposed to pick me up on time but he didn't. He was late again. He's always on time right at five. Mom said he sometimes took a long time putting on his green clothes and be late for his flight when he left. I kind of wished he lost them so he could stay longer and tell me jokes. They're funny jokes like: "J.P., what happens to a..." I forget the rest but I always laugh at the end. The way he tells jokes is funny but I'm not laughing at him. He just tells them good like I knew I'd understand if I were smarter. Mom told me not to laugh at kids at swim practice, so I laugh at them in the locker room. One of them cried and I felt bad and I stopped for a bit. She didn't come back so I couldn't say sorry. Where was Dad? He didn't have another flight to catch. I want Mom to tell me more about what Dad does. I kind of know.

Swim practice was fun. I'm not the fastest one on the team but coach says I've got "grit." I don't know what "grit" is, but my dad has it. I see guys dressed like him on the news and when I was smaller I thought it was him every time and I would cry because I just learned how to read better and saw the words at the bottom of the T.V: "Today 12, 4, 36 lost..." I could tell when the news lady would say who died because her voice got slow and low.

It was a long time before Mom let me watch the news again because she would cry too, and that would make me cry harder because she was crying. She thought I needed something to do to get my mind off Dad like her with those other moms she met up with every week. Her breath would smell like her late night breath in the afternoon, sour like too many yellow and red Jolly Ranchers eaten at Mrs. Clement's. I didn't care about that since I smelled like chlorine. We

put up with each other's smells I guess so I wouldn't talk about it. Swimming does help me. I like the water going around my face like the front of a boat. I feel safe in there and can hold my breath longer than anyone. That's grit, holding your breath.

Every day we would walk across the street from my school and I don't like school. Too many people ask "how's school?" or "how's third grade?" How should it be going? I tune them out, like what Mom says, when someone's mean to you or saying stuff I don't want to hear think of something else. Not everyone's mean to me I just... swim practice is fun.

I like water, you can't breathe it in when you're under but you can do pretty much anything else. And some things can only be done if you're under water. Flipping is my favorite. Right after doing a dive off the small board I take a little more time under and do two flips underwater. It's so cool. My head is out of place like training wheels put on the front of a bike. My belly turns inside me and I feel funny. Other kids say I take too long to swim to the ladder but, I think it's worth it. I don't worry when I'm flipping.

Dad really should've been here by now. He's been weird. When he came back, Mom told me he needed to "adjust" or "adapt." So I understand. He gets mad at me for nothing or has this look where he looks at something far away. But, he isn't looking at anything far away. I checked. I waved my hand in front of him and he didn't see me. One time that happened when he was driving me and Mom for the first time since he got back and we ran a red light. Before, if he said something mean or do something bad on the road he'd say "that was a no." He doesn't say anything now.

The swim coach asked if I wanted a ride home and I said no thanks. He was a stranger and smelled bad. My friends ask if my Dad hurt anyone. I'd say I didn't know. Then Drew would say "my grandpa says anyone who's served and didn't fire his weapon didn't serve at all."

That would make me mad and I'd say mean things about his mom not being married anymore. I ask my Dad, he doesn't want to talk about it and would ask about school or if I liked gross girls.

I think my Dad did kill someone over there. Everyone acts different than him and I guess killing someone makes you act that way. Or maybe he didn't kill someone and that is why he does weird things. Maybe he's sad he let a bad guy live. I'd sneak to the top of the stairs after hearing him close the door to Mom and Dad's room downstairs to hear him playing with something almost every night. He would turn on the T.V. and put it on silent. I could see the light flashing from the kitchen floor. There'd be a slide, crunch-click, tick, and thud all in order. I remember not wanting to breathe too loud because he might hear me. I'd think that I was tapping my foot along with him to the sounds. Then Mom'd come in to the living room and whisper to him. I'm not sure but, I think there'd be crying. I couldn't tell who cried. Soon the door would close and I'd go back to sleep and not know what's going on.

It was getting too late. Everyone had left and I talked with the janitor in the lobby. My Dad's weird and I hope he gets better. Then I saw our big car pull up. I hoped we got home without any trouble. We did. Tomorrow there wasn't swim practice, there was a race.