

Tiffani Burdan

Major Assignment 4:

Intention: I wanted to use a song to express how I came to terms with my dad's death

Song: You Can Let Go by Crystal Shawanda (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VaTDvBo_zI)

"We'll go tomorrow, so you can practice riding on your own Mija," said Daddy.

I thought to myself **I'll finally get to ride my bike by myself**. I was going to go to bed early so that we could get up early to go to the park. I got on the phone with Momma so I can tell her about my day.

"I hope that you had fun today, baby girl," said Momma.

"I did Momma. Tomorrow will be more fun. Daddy is going to take me to the park tomorrow so I can ride my bike by myself" I said.

"That's cool, baby. Ask Daddy to send me a video." said Momma.

"Okay. Goodnight Momma. I love you." I said

"I love you too baby," said Momma as I hung up the phone.

As I finish my conversation with my mom on the phone, I headed to my room. I sat in my room at my dad's house, staring at my ceiling. **I was going to dominate that bike tomorrow**. After a while, I finally drifted off to sleep.

As the sun hit my face, I woke with excitement. I jumped out of bed, threw on my favorite pair of sweatpants and t-shirt. I was ready to go ride my bike down at Memorial Park. However, my dad wasn't up, so I flew into his room, jumping and yelling.

"Get up Daddy! It's tomorrow! I get to ride my bike!" I yelled at the top of my lungs.

Daddy said in his raspy voice, "Let me throw some clothes on Mija."

"Okay," I said.

Once Daddy was dressed, we threw my bike into the back of his truck and headed off to the park. I have never been so excited in my life. As soon as we got to the park, I hopped out of the car ready with my helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads.

Daddy squatted down, looking into my eyes and said, "Mija, calm down. I know you're excited but just be careful."

We got to the sidewalk and started to practice. The wind blowing on my face. The sidewalk flying beneath my bike. My first taste of what freedom's really like. He was running right beside me, his hand holding on the seat. I took a deep breath and hollered, as I headed for the street, "You can let go now, Daddy! You can let go! I think I'm ready to do this on my own! It's still a little bit scary, but I want you to know I'll be okay now, Daddy! You can let go!"

I went down the sidewalk, telling myself, "You got this! You got this!"

I got to the end of the sidewalk, jumped off my bike and yelled, "I did it Daddy! I did it Daddy!"

Daddy ran up to me and said, "Great job, Mija. I'm so proud of you. Do you want to go to Jeb's Corner or McDonald's to celebrate?" asked Daddy.

"Definitely Jeb's Corner," I said.

As Daddy order our food, I thought to myself **I'm a big girl. I rode my bike by myself.** Daddy came back with our food; I still had a big smile on my face. Daddy sent the video to Momma of me riding my bike. After we finished eating, Daddy had to drop me off at Momma's house.

"Thank you for the amazing day Daddy. Hopefully we can do it again soon. Maybe tomorrow?" I asked, hoping he would say yes.

"Mija, you know tomorrow is Momma's day," he said with sadness in his voice.

"I know, it's just we have way more fun than I do with Momma," I said with disappointment.

"You'll see me the day after, okay baby?" He said, giving me hope.

"Okay Daddy," I said as I gave him my final hug and kiss goodbye. He kissed me on my forehead.

"I love you, Mija," he said as I ran inside.

As I laid in my bed that night at Momma's house, I was wishing that tomorrow would be just as fun as today. I drifted off to sleep.

I woke up, hopped out of bed and dashed to my mom's room.

"Do you have anything planned for today?" I asked with excitement in my voice.

"Get off me! Go back to bed! Leave me alone!" yelled Momma.

"Okay," I said as a tear rolled down my cheek.

I went to watch the TV. I didn't bother Momma again until she got out of bed. I sat on the couch the whole day, watching tv, not knowing that this would be the worst day of my life.

It was 7:53 p.m. There was a knock at the door.

"Grandpa! I haven't seen-" I was cut off by his tears. **Why was he crying?**

"You need to come to the hospital," he choked on his tears, "It's Mijo."

Momma was confused, so was I.

"Why?" Momma questioned as she rushed to gather our things.

"He is barely hanging on," said Grandpa.

Grandpa picked me up and put me into Momma's car. Momma was crying. Grandpa was crying. **Was I supposed to be crying?**

She hopped into the car and threw everything into the passenger seat.

She began to whisper, "Do not take him, God. Do not take him from his little girl. Please-" she's never cried harder, "-don't take him."

I didn't know what to think. **Is my Daddy already gone? Will I get to say goodbye?** We got to the hospital, my mom took a breath and said, "Let's go say goodbye to Daddy."

It was killing me to see the strongest man I ever knew, wasting away to nothing in that hospital room.

"You know he's only hanging on for her," that's what the night nurse said.

My voice and heart were breaking as I crawled up in his bed, and said, "You can let go now, Daddy. You can let go. Your little girl is ready to do this on my own. It gonna be a little scary, but I want to you know I'll be okay now, Daddy. You can let go. You can let go, Daddy."

I gave him a big hug and kissed his forehead the way he kissed me last night on my forehead.

“Goodbye Daddy. I love you,” I tried to say without crying.

He squeezed my hand and then let go. In that moment, I knew he was gone.

Momma ran out of the hospital; I went after her. She ran to the parking lot. She fell to her knees and yelled at God, “You took him! Why? My baby girl needs her dad! Give him back!” she pleaded, “Please God! It wasn’t his time yet. Please.”

Grandpa pick up Momma up off the ground like she was a baby. Once we got home, Momma ran to the bathroom, trying not to puke. It took her 15 minutes to stop. The whole time I stood there watching her. Finally, she climbed into bed and patted on the spot next to her.

“I’m sorry I yelled at you this morning! Please don’t leave me. I love you,” she said, giving me a hug. I fell asleep but I could still feel her warmth around me.

We didn’t get over it, we got through it. It didn’t get better, it got different.

It’s been 11 years, and each night my mom tells me, “He gave me the greatest gift, he gave me you, baby.”