

First Place – Essay/Poetry Division
My Dad's Heart Attack
By Kalynn Kinzer

That day, I remember so well. It was April 2005, I was seven years old, and you know how tough it could have been! My mom was picking me up from Stuart Elementary. I was wandering around looking for her blue van. I spotted her on the hill next to the school. I stopped and looked both ways before I crossed the street. A car zipped right past me. An old lady looked like in her sixties let me go by. I skipped on the crosswalk, up the big bulky hill, swung the door opened, plopped my little butt down and slammed the door shut.

“So, how has dad been doing,” I asked. “He is okay. But he has been lying down all day,” she said with a sigh. “I’m getting kinda worried about him,” she said driving down the narrow road. “I’ve been worried about him too,” I said.

We went up our humongous hill where our house was. My mom pulls out her keys, then she looks for that silver stubby key. Rebeka jumped out of nowhere.

“Daddy does not feel good,” she said looking down. Dad was getting ready for work. “Be back in a few hours,” he said kissing us on the head. He walks out and starts the engine on the car. We all waved with gloomy faces. Mom pushed us out of the way and shut the door gently. We sat down and ate our delicious dinner. “Now you guys do your homework,” my mom says with a smile like she thought of a funny joke. Me and my twin brother, who had autism, grabbed our book bags, unzipped the zippers, flung our books on the table and started with our homework. It was an hour or so, when the phone rings. My mother walks up and casually picks up the phone on the third ring. “Hello,” she says looking for an answer. “Hello? Tresa?” I hear my grandma on the other side of the phone. I knew something was wrong. “You need to get to Steven! Steven has had a heart attack!” Somehow they got a hold of grandma. My mom starts to panic. “I’ve got to get over there,” she said, shoving her jacket and shoes on. “I’ll go ask Jarod the neighbor next door to take us.”

She told all of us to get our jacket and shoes on while she asked Jarod. “Kalynn, could you please get Jessica’s socks and shoes on?” Jessica is my little sister, three years old. “Okie dokie,” she shuts the door behind her. I got Jessica’s socks and shoes and put them on just in time as mom comes through the door. “Okay, Jarod is taking us. Let’s go!” she said pushing everyone out the door. We all got in Jarod’s car and pulled out of the driveway. My mom wouldn’t stop thanking Jarod for what he was doing. We scatter out of the car. Mom thanks him the final time. We all get in the blue van, then we finally get to the hospital. We rush through the double doors. “Hello?” my mother said to the nurse out in front. “Yes,” she looks up from her computer. “I’m here for Steven Kinzer.” “Oh right. Come this way. I’m sorry, but your kids can’t come in this moment.” My mother turns around and she asks, “Would you kids be okay out here in the waiting room?” “Sure.” “And, Kalynn, you are in charge watching the kids.” “Okay.” We all sat down in the small waiting room. I played with my sisters. Rebeka, 5 years old, started to complain. “I’m bored.” I was bored too, but I was more concerned about my dad. Finally, my mother steps out behind the doors. “The doctors said you can come in now and see dad.” We pull open the door, I saw my dad just laying there with a mask over his face. “Hi daddy,” we all said at the same time. “Hi,” he said with a moan.

I started crying and I knew my mom was too. We hung around for a while, and then left. "Is daddy going to be okay?" Rebeka asked with tears pouring out of her eyes. "Dad's going to be fine. We just have to pray for him." Mom looked down at her feet. I felt so bad for her. We went to the house and we got our baths and went straight to bed.

The next day, after school, I ask my mom if we could see daddy. She answered, "I don't think so, because they transported him to Chattanooga Hospital, and you have school tomorrow. And tonight we are having a guest, Stephanie and her friend are baby-sitting." Stephanie and her friend moved from Ohio to Tennessee from our church. I was excited that she was coming. My sisters and I stared all evening out of the window. Finally, they pulled into the driveway. "Bye kids! Kalynn, help Stephanie and her friend." My mom closed the door, pulled down the driveway and slammed right into Stacie's friend's car. My mom made a face. But my mom went on. Stephanie didn't notice. "Okay, kids, what do you want to do?" After that, we played and played until 9:00 p.m. We got our baths and went to bed. I couldn't get to sleep. I lay in bed until I hear the door swing open, and I saw Rebeka still up. She was waiting for the same thing too. "Mommy!" we both yelled running towards her, throwing our arms around her. "Kids, you are supposed to be in bed." She looked tuckered out. Finally, Stephanie and her friend set out and I got sleepy and went to bed.

The next day at 4:00 p.m. we went to visit my daddy. We all went through the door. "Daddy, how are you doing?" "Fine I guess. Could you get the remote for me?" I brought him the remote. He turned it to Scooby-Doo for us. My sister started tapping on his arm. "What, Sweetie?" "So daddy could you please come home today. I really miss you!" Jessica said. "I don't know about the kid-o." My dad smiled just like she made her day. I sat right next to him the whole entire time. I wanted to cry, but I didn't want my siblings or mom to cry. And I did not want my dad to feel bad. We each gave him a hug and a kiss. I ran back to him before going out the door. "I miss you daddy." "I miss you too." I saw tears swell up in his eyes. I waved and caught up with mom. It was silence for the whole entire time we drove home. The next day was the triumph.

I did not know what was happening when I was little. My mom never told me what really happened until I got older. You see, I prayed each night for dad. The reason why he had a heart attack, he had a blood clot in his heart. It was the size of a golf ball but the blood clot dissolved, and went through his veins. It cleaned out the plaque that was clogging his vein. He did not have surgery. You may not believe in miracles, but I experienced one in my lifetime.