

Rockstar

by Chelsea, eighth grade writer



The sun was setting, and a chill was just barely tangible in the evening air. The pink bougainvillea vines waved lazily to me in the cool southern California breeze. As I walked across the lawn to the front door, I felt awkward and out of place. My uncle had been invited to dinner with his neighbors in the house next door, and since my family was there, we were invited as well. However, just because my uncle was friends with these people doesn't mean that I felt any more comfortable around them. I was a stranger in a stranger's house, and on top of that, I was expected to eat their food! Thankfully I was with my family, so I wasn't totally alone. Emily bounded up the steps in an effort to beat me there, of course. I wasn't trying, so it didn't matter anyway. Mom chatted with my aunt, and my dad and uncle talked about the man who lived here. Apparently, he was in a band and wrote his own songs. My dad used to be in a band and my uncle is currently in a band ... total music junkies. I sighed and put on my best 'Meeting New People' smile, which probably looked more like a pained grimace, or someone trying very hard to hold back a sneeze.

As usual, meeting new people is never as bad as it seems at first, and the family was very nice. The man's name was Andy and his wife was Melissa and they had just had a baby boy, Thomas. Barbequing ribs and tri-tip permeated the air with the delectable smell of garlic, spices, and the bittersweet scent of oranges. After dinner, Andy opened the large door to the free-standing garage. Inside was an electronic drum set, several guitars and microphones, all wired to amplifiers. He conspired with my uncle, and together they got Daddy to play lead guitar and sing while my uncle played bass and Andy was on drums.

Everyone gathered around inside the small garage. The floor was concrete covered in patches with faded threadbare carpet. The wires for the amplifiers trailed in chaotic rats' nests across the floor, and the sole table against the wall was littered with beer bottles, cigarette butts, and random musical instruments, such as a tambourine and a maraca. This was obviously a guy haven. The men tuned their guitars and bantered about which song they were to sing. They finally decided on the song 'Proud Mary.' Everyone ready, someone called out "One -two, ONE – TWO – THREE – FOUR!" and suddenly my dad was playing lead, my uncle strumming the bass line, and Andy whacking the electric drum set like his life depended on it. It was then that time stood still as my dad began to sing. The exposed light directly above his head abruptly turned into a spotlight. He was no longer dressed in a blue sweatshirt and old jeans, but one of the outlandish costumes he had worn 'back in the day' when he played with his band. The buzz of the cars outside became the roar of the crowd, and I--his daughter--was the luckiest girl alive. I had the best front row seat ever, and I was watching the world's coolest Rockstar. I was entranced as I stared up at the man who used to be 'just daddy.' Suddenly he had transformed into the musical genius my uncles were always claiming he was. I stared in rapture at the Rockstar... my Maddy ... my Rockstar.

The song ended and I shook my head, trying to clear it. A few more songs were sung, but I wasn't really paying attention. It was getting late, so we said our goodbyes and walked back across the lawn to my uncle's house. The rest of the family was walking a few paces ahead of me and my uncle as he questioned me quietly, "You've never seen your dad play like that before, have you?"

"No, never. He was in his band long before I was born." I shook my head again and sighed, "You were right, he is amazing."

My uncle just laughed and clapped me on the back.

Later that night, on the floor in my uncle's living room, snuggled up in my sleeping bag and my sister breathing quietly next to me, I thought about my dad. From my earliest memories, I can remember him playing the guitar and singing to me ... watching him play and sing as my sister danced ... listening to him practice his latest favorite song from the radio. Those times were not particularly special in any way; they were just something Daddy did. Tonight, I had caught a glimpse of my Daddy, the Rockstar, and I would never see him as 'just daddy' again.

This eighth grader worked on **word choice** and **idea development** as she wrote this personal memoir. Read the narrative and comment on these two traits. The lesson that inspired this writing was found online at the WritingFix website.