

Dad
Harry Zirkelbach 05-24-2009

Words limit any father. They are that large. Especially to sons.

**In my 70's, a friend,
mentioned that his dad was the only hero he had, ever.
Until then I had never entertained that thought.
But on reflection, I recognized a truth.**

**The early, larger story.
My father was he second of five children, the only boy.
At the age of 12 his father disappeared,
never came home from work one day.
A few days later, dad left the 5th grade, went to work supporting his mother
and four sisters. He lived with them, providing material and personal support,
until the youngest sister finished school.
It was a duty of which he never complained,
and they would repay him with their friendship all his years.
This son and brother could do no wrong.**

**He married, became father to a son and daughter.
I would miss much in telling about him for 500 pages.**

**So here he appears in 400 words.
Early summer 1931, the boys in my Freedom Pa fourth grade
were going to a larger city where there was a zoo, and game park.
I, six other boys, were being driven there by a classmates' family.
It would be a long afternoon of fun, friendship.,
with boys who had been in school together four long years.**

**For me, the day began with chores at home. Then, someone had busted out the
screen from the back screen door, a chore that my dad would care for,
once he had a box of tacks. I was chosen to buy the tacks.
The store was few blocks away, and I would then be free to join the gang.**

**I was given a 50 cent piece for the purchase.
At our small neighborhood store, the tacks were the right size.
Buying them, getting the change, I ran all the way home.
This was not unusual, for I recall running everywhere.**

**Once home this conversation.
Dad "How much were the tacks?" Me "Ten cents."**

Dad, "Give me the change."

**Then began the great search.
I had no money, was certain I had been given the change.**

**In the ensuing hours, well maybe ten minutes, I was stripped searched,
ran back to the store to make sure the grocer recalled giving me the change,
then walking slowly, face to the dirt road , retraced those two blocks,
looking for the three missing coins, find nothing.**

**At the end of this eternity, all four our of us
considered this money lost forever.
It was a tragedy for my parents and myself, because as a surprise,
those coins were for me, for treats and rides that afternoon.**

**Still, I would have the journey and friendship.
Off I went running the two plus miles to town,
and the valley where the fiend lived,
now thinking only of excitement. to come**

**All were ready when I arrived. We finished loading things
that family had packed for our enjoyment.**

Suddenly, my father was with us.

**He took me aside, gave me the missing quarter, dime, nickel.
He explained that in returning from the store to the our house with the tacks
I apparently had opened the top of the tack box, stored the change.
Then forgot that simple precaution.**

**And with a quiet, final, "Enjoy the afternoon."
Dad left,
retracing the two plus miles he had walked
to give their treasury to me.**