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Period 7

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Death By Corona

The air was warm and soft. The sun had just set, the sky was turning to a dark blue. Music was playing while a strong aroma overwhelmed me. The smell was a mix of my dad's Polo cologne and hamburgers being cooked on the grill next to me. I was sitting in the green fold up chair that always sat on my wrap around porch. My eyes lingered on my father who wore his goofy smile while he danced to The Styx. Occasionally he would sing the wrong words with confidence as if they were the right words. He had a spatula in his right hand and a Corona in his left. My mom came outside to see how things were going, he asked her to dance. There was a tension between them I hadn't noticed before. She denied his request and went back inside through the sliding doors.

"Babe come dance with me," my dad asked ever so kindly. How could I say no? He was so happy, I couldn't bare turning the corners of his mouth down, the way my mom had seconds before. He set down

the spatula but continued to grasp the beer as if his life depended on it. I stood up and he held my left hand with his right. He sang with his beautifully raspy voice. We swayed back and forth, my feet on top of his. I was laughing before I knew it, dazed by his goofy attitude. My mom came out again, bringing me back to reality.

It was just a few months later that despair filled the living room at my camp. I walked in after saying goodbye to some of my best friends. All eyes were on me, but they weren't happy. They were tear filled eyes. I looked at my mom who had the same face as the rest of my family; utterly distraught. She told me to sit down as she had something she needed to tell me. I climbed up onto her lap and tried to prepare myself. I couldn't believe what she had told me.

My dad was with us a few nights ago. It wasn't possible that he was now gone, forever. I didn't understand death until I saw my dad laying in his casket. His skin cold to the touch, his face unsettlingly still, and his decaying body turned blue and purple. The man I thought was indestructible was now laying underground. He was driving late at night. He fell asleep from exhaustion. His car ran off the road into a ditch. He was dead on impact. For six years this is what I thought to be the truth.

I was now 12, finally understanding life for what it really is.

Sitting in an Italian restaurant my mom told me she had been in a fight the night of his passing. They fought about how unhappy she was living in Louisiana. She wanted to stay in Maine. He had promised her they would move in a few years so she could be closer to her family. After the phone call, my dad did what he usually did; he drank. Only he went to a bar this time, drinking beer after beer in hopes he would forget all about my mother. His brain was not functioning by the time he left the bar.

He never made it home. Like many others, he was intoxicated while driving. He drove drunk all the time, it was the way he grew up. Why should he get in an accident this time if he never has before? I will never know what really happened, why he went off the road, but I do know that his addiction was to blame. The way he grew up was to blame. Alcohol was to blame.

Hundreds of people lost someone that day; his co-workers, friends, and family. He was a well known man. Now he was a well known dead man. I was a child who would grow up without a father; without someone to take me to the father daughter dances, without

someone to be overprotective when I bring a boy home, without
someone to walk me down the aisle. I am just one of many who have
lost someone to the power of alcohol. Don't let there be more.