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Essay 4

Ocean in his Belly

When I think of heroism, I think of my father, Antonio Ibarra. Everything that I have is because of him. I owe him everything, yet I don't know how I can do that. He's done more for me than any person I've ever met.

Since I was young, I remember only seeing my dad three times a day, in the morning, lunch, and evening. I'd watch as he would come home from work for breakfast where he would eat for an hour. I remember him pouring his coffee into his large blue mug and allowing me to dip Oreos in it. That didn't last long, however. He would get disgusted with me when I would soak my Oreo using my fingers to push it down further to the bottom of the mug. He would grab a mug for me, and he would pour a small stream of coffee for me for my Oreos. That's how I first started drinking coffee. Dipping my Oreos because my dad didn't want my unwashed fingers in his mug.

When he would come home for lunch, I would get up from the couch, turning the T.V. off while doing so. I would go to the kitchen, making it look like I was helping my mom with something. He would still call me lazy. He would shout at me, ordering me to go out and pick up the sticks from the yard. The same sticks that the wind would punch out of the trees whenever they were furious. He was kind enough to let me eat first, but as soon as he would take his last

bite of food, he'd make me put on my shoes to go outside. For the next couple hours, I'd be slouching over the yard, trying my hardest to seek out any twig in my path. My goal was to make him proud, but really, I didn't want to be yelled at again.

My dad was a very honest man. I have yet to meet anyone that doesn't sugarcoat things like he does. I remember the day I was going to buy my first phone. I had just entered my senior year of high school and wanted my dad to accompany me to Verizon, thinking that the process of buying a phone was going to be more complicated than it was. I remember the salesman showing me two different colored iPhones, one black and one pink. I picked up the pink iPhone and started to hand it to the salesman. My dad stopped me, saying that the iPhone looked too much like the phones that the girls have. I paused for a second. I quickly yanked the iPhone from the salesman and shook my head.

"I got the wrong one, my bad," I said.

I try not to make eye contact with my dad as the salesman takes the black iPhone to the register. I still wonder what my dad would say if I told him that pink is one of my favorite colors. He is someone that gets right to the point. Like when he would see me lying on the sofa after a very bad and rough day at school, he'd stare at me. He would shake his head and call me lazy.

I remember when I was younger, I would watch T.V. with my dad. I'd try to understand the talking heads on the screen, as they would explain things like the housing crisis, immigration issues, and terrorist acts. I don't know why my dad would only watch the news, and I don't know why I didn't just leave. I would rest my head on my dad's belly. I'd hear his stomach rumble. I would put my ear against his stomach, like one would when hearing the ocean from a seashell. I'd laugh, as the sounds would remind me of Looney Tunes type theme. My head rises from his

stomach. My eyes gaze up at my his face. His head was tilted back, letting his snores rise from out of his mouth. Now, a couple years later, during every visit from college, I'd sit next to him on the couch. We'll both be watching the news still. I'd like to rest my head on his stomach once again, just to keep this memory fresh in my head. I'd like to, but I know he would call me lazy.