

Denise Duhamel

HEY DAD

Today I'm thinking *poor me*, even though I have plenty to eat. Even though I have a refrigerator that works and refrigerator magnets to hold business cards of the doctors I can afford to see if I need to. I keep losing money though—I'm not talking about stocks, but real money. It must roll out of my wallet when I fumble to pay a clerk or out of the pockets of my jeans. I had three fifty dollar bills when I went into Walgreens and now they are gone. This is the Walgreens next to the liquor store where I lost my credit card last week buying Courvoisier for a party. By the time I noticed my plastic was missing, someone had already wracked up \$400 worth of booze at the same store. Phone calls to American Express, another small mess. Having money has always made me feel safe, like having a dad, I guess. I kiss my finger and lift it to your picture every night, the picture in which I am in another picture on the mantle behind you, where the clock will always read 2:20. You have on your big glasses, the kind David Letterman liked to make fun of in a segment called "Men with Big Glasses." I'm glad you wore them because in the reflection I can see mom flash the camera. She and Michele put some new flowers on your grave this week and you'll be happy to know they finally put your death date on the stone. Mom alternates between real and silk flowers that keep blowing away. I am too far to visit your grave as often as they do, but I wanted you to know that I made you a little altar with your cufflinks and a pink petal that blew into my bedroom the day I came home from the funeral

and a tiny wooden snake from Mexico
that Rigoberto gave me as a sympathy
present. He lost his father, too,
when he was much younger. I blubbered away
when I saw *The Wrestler*, a movie
I think you would have really liked.
I tried to remember the names of the wrestlers
you took Michele and me to see when we were little.
Michele doesn't remember either and thinks perhaps
we just watched them on TV. I know it must seem
like I'm fine now – what with the divorce finally over
and my travel and my job. But I keep losing things
which remind me of losing you. My car's transmission
died, for example. Then my bracelet
slipped from my wrist right into a subway grate.
I know you would have said, *That's awful, kiddo,*
but don't worry – just get on with it. And I do.
But whenever I go for a walk, I go with you.