

Armpits

I remember, as a kid, the sensation under my arms when my dad would lift me up. It always felt uncomfortable, his hands gripping at my sides, digging into my ribs. But it was always accompanied by the weightlessness of flight. He was so strong. Today I put my hands under his arms to help him get up off the couch. It had grown late, and he needed to go to bed. His thighs trembled as he became upright, searching for balance. He's shorter now, not fully able to stand up straight. One shoulder sits lower than the other, giving him a bit of an italyics look. I remember many times as a kid sitting in the car as my mom drove me home from school and seeing my dad on his daily walk in the neighborhood. His arms would swing up and down, his stride long and powerful. Today we took short, stiff steps to the bedroom, his slippers barely leaving the ground. Throughout the day you can see where he's walked on the carpet, his slippers leaving a trail from his shuffle.

I miss my dad, but... he's right here in front of me. He looks somehow just as I've always known him to, but at the same time so much different. He left me a voicemail years ago that I saved and listen to occasionally. It goes, "Hey Will, it's Ron!" He laughs at himself here. "Ron." He tries again, "Hey Will, it's your dad! Also named Ron!" It makes me laugh for some reason. He goes on to ask me to give him a call sometime. I don't remember if I ever did.