

I'm sorry I promised

An Acrostic poem

Feel the breeze in my hair.

Feel the dirt in my toes.

Feel the ball in my hand.

I felt confronted.

My emotions take the throttle with a hesitant manoeuvre.

Sewed edges and black and white patches felt in its infancy, despite being in my palms for years on end.

the Oasis of the yard was unused and the net, as old as me, still shone a sickly white.

Racy mornings of playing in the sun, kicking the ball, rolling in the mud, *with my father*, was long a distant hope.

Reality bombarded me each morning, that my friends had loving fathers and I don't.

Yet I still felt so empty.

Ignored. Even if I knew.

"Please, one game." I begged as he jangled his keys in his suit pocket.

"Remember, you promised."

Only one game is my wish, just one to satisfy my years of waiting in the yard every morning. But it never happens.

"Maybe later." He raised a commanding hand to me and jogged towards the driveway, a habit developed over the years.

I have forgotten what later is. 30 minutes? An hour? A year?

Stark contours of buildings and the pervasive smell of greed and cheap perfume is where he was headed.

leaving me with a handful of Endless promises and a placid surface shining a deep cobalt blue. The strangled cry leaves my throat as I bay my loneliness to the morning sky.

“Don’t wait for me for dinner, I have to meet with a few colleagues.” he chirped, pulling out of the driveway as he knocked the soccer net with the side-view mirror.

One year ... Graduation ... High School, “*Too busy.*” New friend. New relationship. Study...study. Year 11. “*Maybe later.*” Year 12. Exams. Celebration. University acceptance letters. New house, new friends, new school, new wife, one kid, two kids...

New life.

‘Beeep.’ The line connects, for the first time in years. The sun had set, and dusk had settled over the city, once the second home of my Father. My Dad, who’s wan features had crumbled along with the plaster surrounding my childhood home, had called to say two words...

“I’m sorry.”

Memories fly past like the cold wind inside my stomach.

“Sorry that I was never there.”

Oh, how the thoughts sting, like daggers in my heart.

Remember the good things.

Remember the good things.

“You, you never did anything wrong, you were just a boy...” I remember the moments where I would drive to work, leaving my son in the yard alone.

“I’m sorry.”

Poignant reminders clouded my head.

Resurrecting thoughts that I buried deep in dirt, that I thought I had locked in a cavern of the past.

“Opportunities that I missed.” *I didn't watch my son grow into the man he is today. I was always too...*

“My fault...”

“It was never your fault.”

Silence. Excruciating pain bubbled and the clammy air froze the teardrops as they formed.

Earnest tears, confronted with the emotions of letting my son sprint by; what I should have been faced with moons before.

“Dad,” a soft voice asked for pardon on the other side of the phone, “I forgive you.”

