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The Life You Learn From

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DAN SWEATT

THE LIFE YOU LEARN FROM

After several interruptions and
no-you-go-aheads, my father laughed
and said, "Son, us Sweatts, we're terrible
communicators when we're passionate
about something." A line like that
earned him the right to speak, and he
began to read over his life
like an obituary written just before
deadline. I could recite it for him,
having heard most of it before:
leaving Cincinnati quickly, selling his guitars,
letting her go. He says he tells me things
because his father didn't. His father
arrested criminals, chased skirts,
and did little else. He speaks to me,
hoping I see him as a hero who saved me
from his own hell. But a father is not a hero;
he is the life you learn from.