Amanda Garbinski

Baby Bird

“Mom, what if the ambulance is called down to the baseball field?” I joked. Five minutes earlier, my mom picked up the phone to receive a call from my brother’s head little league coach. The brief phone call had my mom scrambling to gather all of her four kids into the car. “We have to go Jeremy’s practice to see Dad” were the only words she said as her mind wandered aimlessly into the never-ending possibilities of what may be wrong.

Lights and sirens of the ambulance met us at an intersection and lead us all the way to the baseball field. My light joke turned into a dark reality as men unloaded from the emergency vehicle and rushed towards the playing field. I could not make sense of the situation, but I knew from my mom’s expression something was wrong. Her face searched helplessly around the field as she tried her best to focus on pulling her car into a parking space. She jumped out of the car instantly as it jolted to a stop. My little, 9-year-old body tried so hard to follow her into the crowd of people who stood around my dad.

Reaching hands and assuring voices unloaded the rest of my siblings. The whimper of Garret, my 1-year-old brother, became like wet cement as the anxiety pushed farther into my chest. My limp body struggled from hitting the ground as my weary breathes exerted pumps of life to my core. Desperately leaning out of a woman’s arms, Garret reached for me in hope to be comforted. I grabbed and held him tightly as the eyes of my two younger sisters swelled with tears. Chills ran from my elbows to the back of my neck as each whimper of their fear emptied the little strength I had left. I have always been used to the relentless crying of my younger siblings, but this time was incomparably different. I felt as if a warm blanket left my back, exposing me to the harsh weather of winter. I needed the warmth of my mom.

My knees were weak, my arms were tired, and my throat was hurting from holding back tears. The assuring voices of women were lost as my ears tightened from the constricting grip of my enclosing throat. My ears were only longing for one noise, my mom’s reassurance. After forever, my dad’s frail and strange body was loaded into the back of the ambulance. The doors slammed and the small bright windows lured my eyes into the craziness that was going on inside.

My dad became sick that day and needed the help from my mom. I knew her blanket would always be over me, but now I realized I had to share. I have knit my own blanket, sheltering myself, protecting others, and building onto the little girl I was. I gained an independence that has helped me mature and slowly mold me into the person I want to be. The self-reliance I have earned in the past eight years has helped me grow from my own roots, even if my growth is not nearly finished. Most birds fly out of the nest, but the nest dropped from the branches and I was forced to learn how to fly.