

LIFE

- Jordan Turner

I never could understand my dad. He'd argue with anyone about anything and was always tryin' to live care-free. But I guess nobody ever told him that it comes with a price, especially if you're a thirty somethin' year old black man with a fifteen year old son. People assumed I was his son even though they couldn't tell. My dad was large and pretty muscular. Not like muscle bound, but still strong enough to dent the wall of our apartment. But then again, that was whenever he was angry. And unlike me, he was light-skinned, like two shades from bein' white. Me, I was dark brown, but not like pitch black. He said he'd describe me as havin' smooth brown skin. He got welfare checks, but it's not like he wasn't lookin'... nobody was hiring. Plus he was always drinkin'. I don't mean just beer; he drank vodka and on New Year's he'd drink wine from the bottle. And ironically, he always told me it was bad to drink, 'cause it destroyed your kidneys and stuff. One afternoon on Saturday, I had went home after walkin' to the gas station and buying myself some chips and when I got back to my apartment building, my dad was passed out drunk and then a few minutes later while we're watchin' TV. BAM! Police come and break in through the door. They both were tall, but I remember the chief being huge and black as burnt fried chicken. He had this skinny white dude that talked like he was from the streets arrest my dad and escort us out. My dad asked why and they said because the landlord was leavin' him messages saying he had slacked off on his payments and at one point had punched the landlord. Dude probably deserved it. I guess I shouldn'ta been surprised. But the chief saw how we were living and must've felt he could relate to us or somethin', 'cause he said instead of jail, spend a few months in rehab. The rehab part I understood, but I didn't get the endangerment part. But my best guess is that it was because he was drunk most of the time. But at least he was a "happy drunk." When he asked what would happen to me, the chief said I'd be put in the Willton Redridge Shelter until my dad got himself fixed. I almost cried, but made myself not to. I'd always heard about the stuff that went down at Redridge. Mostly boys there, and a few girls. Teen pregnancy, kids putting kids in the ER... If all these were true, I wouldn't survive a week. But on the bright side, if there was one, there was a program to help the kids there with what they wanted to do when they grew up. Maybe if I was lucky, they'd help me go into the music business.

Dreams.