



The Father

Sharon Olds

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The Father is a sequence of poems, a daughter's vision of a father's illness and death. It chronicles these events in a connected narrative, from the onset of the illness to reflections in the years after the death. The poems are impelled by a passion to know and a freedom to follow wherever the truth may lead, and it goes into areas of feeling and experience rarely entered in poetry . . . The ebullient language, the startling images, the sense of connectedness seize us immediately. Sharon Olds transforms a harsh reality with truthfulness, with beauty, with humor—and without bitterness. The deep pain in *The Father* arises from a death, and from understanding a life. But there is joy as well. In the end, we discover we have been reading not a grim accounting but an inspiring tragedy, transcending the personal.

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