

Fifty Years For My Father Siebert J. Schwartz February 13, 2026

A day after my 9th birthday, you walked in the hospital.

You had a heart attack. Surgeries failed.

Two days later you were carried out fifty years ago today.

What did I know from parenting or mourning?

You read us stories, tucked us in, went back to work sometimes.

That work undid you yet you are now more faint memory than presence.

I didn't know from an unseasonably warm few February days and being off school, Valentine's day candy and homework dropped off. Family came and went.

Now I am left with lighting a candle, saying a prayer once a year.

I grieve what little time we had, wondering sometimes how guidance or tutoring would have set my steps differently.

Neither you nor us, nor our mother for sure had much choice in the matter.

What can I offer but my shrug and an sympathetic "Sorry" for the hand of cards?

Maybe it was a whole weird deck.

It took me 13 to move from shock and depression to 6 months of hidden anger.

Maybe you were with me, watching, but what good would that have done?

That hurt moved from you to the situation as I took another shot of compassion remembering you did what you had to do as best as anyone could.

While we're at it, I'm sorry that your Stella guitar warped in the basement.

though I tried to learn on it, and wish you had taught us unconditionally not tied to our grades.

I think of your rings, smell of your clothes,

the Countess Mara tie and overripe cologne I swiped at 16.

I still have two pairs of your Argyle socks I'm afraid to wear less they too tear from me.

How I remember the story of Jacob making lentils for Isaac,

Mourning Abraham, the round lentils like an open mouth O.

My numb eyes are dry, tearless.

I smile a little at the trees because you quoted Joyce Kilmer, and a poem as lovely.

I still hug them and lean against them for their own sake not only because I lost you.

Maybe it's you saying hello and I'm often too daft to respond.

Fifty years leaves a lot of space for lost words.

I'm left shocked at much of life, sighing oh.