

Fear Cost You

By Bethany Brown

You spent
your whole life in fear.
You needed to be in charge.
You didn't play hockey as a child because
you were afraid of being injured.
You were afraid of failing, so
you wore
yourself thin, staying up all night to study and finish assignments for school.
You didn't learn to play an instrument because
you were afraid of playing a wrong note.
You were afraid
you would be judged.
You didn't want to get
your drivers' licence because
you were afraid of being in an accident, but
you got
your licence because
you were more afraid of being in an accident due to someone else driving and
you not being in control.

You were afraid of getting married because
you couldn't predict the future.
You did get married though, because
you were afraid of being alone. And
you had three children.
You never gave them swimming lessons because
you were afraid of them drowning. Because of that fear,
your middle child,
your only son, did drown. He couldn't swim and
you were too afraid to try to save him because
you couldn't swim.

Your oldest daughter was destroyed by her beloved brother's death. She started dating boys
you didn't approve of.
You were afraid that she would get hurt.
You were the reason she went through so many breakups.

—At seventeen, she ran away with one of those boys
you were afraid of.

Your wife wanted the police to find her, but
you were afraid of what they would find.
You were afraid of having to accept her again.

—She did come home.

You discovered she had eloped. And that her husband had been arrested.
You were afraid he would come back, and
you feared what she would do.
You kept a constant eye on her.

—The day before he was released from prison, she committed suicide.

You knew
your wife was furious with
you by this time. She had lost two children because of
your fears and need for control. She would not let
you coddle
your youngest daughter to death.
You were afraid of what
your wife would do, so
you left her before she had the chance to leave
you.

—That was twenty years ago. Yesterday,
your youngest daughter walked down the street
you now live on. She was holding a toddler in her arms.

—Her fearless husband walked beside her, their six-year-old skipping next to him.

You stood up from weeding as she walked by. She shook her head slightly as she cast
you a look of disdain. She held her toddler closer, and her husband took her hand.

—She walked away from
you with an upright posture, fearless. Something she definitely didn't learn from
you. She is in control of her life without having to be in control of anyone else.