I don't think I've ever played catch with my father, nor have we ever gone hunting or fishing together. We went camping once when I was a boy scout, but I could tell that a city boy like my dad didn't belong out in the wilderness. While everyone else hiked comfortably with sturdy boots, warm and durable clothes, and neat backpacks, my father stumbled behind in his dirty, torn tennis shoes, pressed khakis, and a small satchel overflowing with socks and underwear. I know he was trying to be a part of my life, but I never asked, nor expected, him to go camping again. My father tried to be an assistant coach on my little league baseball team, but he didn't fit that role very well either. By the standards that most Nashville fathers had set, my dad had failed to be a substantial part of my life. But fortunately for him, I always thought playing catch was a waste of time, I never enjoyed hunting or fishing, I hate baseball, and I would much rather spend the night in a Holiday Inn than in the very cold and wet wilderness. Luckily for my dad, I was truly my father's son.

If we didn't fish, hunt, camp, or play sports, then one may begin to ask, "What's left to do on a Saturday morning?" Well, go to work of course. (It wasn't just another boring trip to the office, however. It was an adventure. After my dad had finished his coffee and cigarette,
he would change out of his torn blue robe into a pair of dark blue jeans he must have had since college and a faded collared shirt that was probably just as old. Not giving a second thought to his appearance, we would begin our weekly quest by getting into his little gray 2-door and racing straight to the Donut Den. I would walk back and forth, looking at the wide selection of donuts and pastries and without fail, I would order half a dozen donut holes and a cinnamon twist. {Once our pit stop was complete, the trek downtown would once again resume} As the head of the Nashville Legal Department, my dad had a parking spot reserved right at the capital. On our Saturday morning journeys, however, we would park what seemed like miles away and I would ride on his shoulder through the city as we finished the last leg of our mission. "Look right there," he would point and say," That's where I almost got into a fight with the Grand Dragon of the KKK." When we reached one intersection at Church Street, he would always say, "This is the most dangerous intersection in town. Those stoplights don't mean a damn thing to these idiots." No matter how often I heard it, I knew, even at that young age, to smile and act interested. Every once in a while, however, that city would pull forth a new tale that I had not yet heard and the walk would be worth all the repetition. When we finally got to his office, I would receive a new secret mission to accomplish in the nearly empty

This page starts to sound like a list of events. Use self-reflection or dialogue to break it up.
building. Usually he sent me to copy secret documents on the Xerox
machine, or to leave a secret message on someone's Dictaphone.
When my mission was accomplished I would report back to his tall,
black desk to receive new orders. He always sat behind what
seemed like mountains of papers and files, his little body almost
hidden from site, but he always knew exactly what and where
everything was, and seemed to do everything so swiftly and easily.
The large, official certificates on the walls with the signatures of
mayors and governors always drew my attention, my imagination
exaggerating my father's power in the city. His shelves were filled of
family pictures and books that I was sure my dad had never touched.
He must have been able to sense when I was starting to get restless
because the office visits always seemed to end right when I was
ready to go. Our weekly adventure, however, was only beginning.

Most kids my age spent Saturday afternoons at parks, play-
grounds, or at home. The Saturday adventure took me, however,
to a place called Doug's Grill. Doug's was your usual little sports bar
with dozens of neon signs, thick air filled with the smells of smoke
and stale beer, small windows that seemed to repel all natural light,
and a comfortable little bar ready to be filled. Everyone knew our
names as we sat on our wobbly little thrones at our sacred mahogany
altar. My usual order was a grilled cheese, chips, and a shirley temple.
As I got older, I found that shirley temples were for girls and real men drank Coke. My dad, of course, would have water, since "drinking is a sin"; or at least he told me it was water. As my dad watched the game, grumbling about lines or spreads or something, I would venture back into the kitchen where Jack was cooking at the grill. Old Jack always wore the same dirty white wife-beater, greasy apron, little white cap that barely fit on his thick gray hair, and always had a big cigar crushed between his teeth. As soon as I saw him I would shout, "You old goat!" and run as he, yelling censored profanity, chased me away with a big butcher knife and an even bigger smile.

When I got bored of watching football or baseball on the TV, I would retreat back to the pinball machine where I would hear my dad tell tales about how he was the pinball champion of eastern Massachusetts when he was a kid. I don't think they had pinball machines back then, but if they did, I'm sure he would have been the best.

When we went home after our long voyage, my dad would stop the car at the head of the driveway. I would hop into his lap and take control of the helm. Of course, the extent of my control was getting to steer the wheel while he made sure I didn't screw up too bad. After taking a quick nap or doing some chores, I would witness my father doing what he loved to do the most. While the pots bubbled
over and the pans steamed, my dad would dance around behind the counter wearing his "Kiss the Cook" apron, cutting vegetable, stirring sauces, and making his magic happen. In high school, he had been in the cooking club rather than the football team, and coming from a working class, Irish family in Boston, he could work miracles with potatoes. "You're lucky, Har," he would say," For the two weeks before payday all we ate was corned beef and cabbage, and sometimes only cabbage. You're very lucky." If I ever disliked something he made, he would calmly say," You'll learn to like it." That was a small price to pay, however, for the many delicacies that he could create. Once the feast was over and the dishes sat untouched in the sink, he would bring me upstairs and tuck me into bed. I always got a story before I went to sleep, either about a little squirrel that nearly escapes a deadly owl, or a little rabbit stuck on a sandbar, almost eaten by an alligator. The story never really changed, but I was always entertained and kept in suspense as to whether the little critter would escape again. My day was over, but I knew that there would be many more to follow; though now, looking back on it, I don't think there could have ever been enough. I love my dad and I know he's done a great job. It may not seem the best way to some people, but as my dad always says," There's the right way, there's wrong way, and then there's my way, so get used to it."