

Developing My Paper on the poem "Instructions on Not Giving Up" by Ada Limón

Argument:

I would want my father Louis to read this poem because he was recently laid off from his job at a software company in Manhattan. This poem is about how the tree says "I'll take it all" and it carries on despite a hard winter, suffering, and losing (temporarily) its colorful leaves and blossoms. Once again his "tree," his career, the trunk of our family will also turn green again.

Plan for individual paragraphs:

P1 The tree has gone through winter and lost its leaves; it has suffered—like my dad Louis, 49. In July, he lost his job with only two weeks notice. He was a network security person, one of three. The company, ABC Software, laid off two of them. The one who stayed was his friend, Reggie. They still are friends—I will compare their friendship to the tree's and spring's returning blossoms in a later paragraph.

P2 My dad's attitude is tough, resilient—learned from my grandpa John in Trinidad. [Grandpa John's stories—experiences] Dad always says "you have to keep trying"—this is what he told me when I had trouble—middle school and HS math. He said the same in July—when he broke the news to us over dinner at a diner after a family day at Central Park. Like grandpa John and my dad, Louis. Tough, resilient, keeps fighting for the family—like the tree [and really, all trees] at the end of the poem that says "I'll take it . . . a new slick leaf/Unfurling like a fist to an open palm, I'll take it all"(lines 13-14). Grandpa John would say—"keep a stiff upper lip" and "all of life is good."

P4 Like all the colorful blossoms and leaves dropped on the ground from trees, my dad spent a few weeks at home thinking about how great his job was and feeling bad for what he just lost—so did me and my sister, Myra and my mom Susan. Like the crabapple's "fuchsia funnels"(line 1) or the cherry tree's "cotton candy-colored blossoms"(line 4)—they just celebrated his birthday there in a rec room, invited 25 people, had a red velvet cake for him. Reggie gave him a white Yankees cap. He missed being a bigshot there. He always gave advice and people thanked him with little things—a pen, a donut, etc. His boss, Jerome, a fifty-something Ecuadorian guy, once took all the IT guys to a ballgame. —I'll ask him about more memories.

P5 For a few years there we were living off the fat of the land—we got new furniture, phones, clothes, went out to eat a lot. He was doing well. We were all enjoying “the shock of white/and taffy, the world’s baubles and trinkets”(lines 6-7) but I guess the beauty of spring doesn’t last forever.

P6 Like winter for the tree, it was really winter for my family—bills—cable bills, phone plan. Car/gas. Helping me pay for college.

P7 Gradually, he began looking for a new job over the summer and he has a couple of leads now. This is like how for trees, “patient, plodding, a new skin/growing over whatever winter did to us”(lines 9-10). He was hurt by losing his job, and it strained his relationship with Reggie [more details] but he is cheery now and hoping to find something soon. Last week, he went on another interview—in Queens/medical company.

P8 Conclusion