

Write Your Life

A micro memoir writing project

That time you were so wrong and didn't know it (or maybe you really did know it)

Haircut

It was the edge of summer. I leaned close and whispered to Andrea, "A little shorter this time." Our son had assumed his customary position. Slouched in the chair. Glowering at himself in the mirror. It wasn't Andrea. Whoever did the cutting, Gemma, Barb, Stephanie, got the same dark, seething boy.

"Did you start your summer vacation, hon?"

"No."

"Gonna play baseball? Go to the beach?"

He sank a little lower, considering his answer. Then, "No."

Four o'clock cars out on Woodward rushed by the shop. She began and finished with the electric clippers. At some point she asked him if Dad was having a cut today too. She asked him, then turned in my direction and flashed me a wide-eyed look. He said nothing. It was up to me, after all, whether I wanted my hair to be cut. And I was dead sure a shave and a haircut would not have helped.

Ten minutes.

He said nothing when he climbed down from the chair. He walked across the floor and disappeared into the bathroom. When the door clicked shut behind him, I said to Andrea he'd be glad in a week, maybe even a few days.

We think we know everything.

Last week my grandson finally had his hair cut. It was an unmanageable mop, in his face, dragging in food on his plate when he ate his dinner. For weeks, no, make that for months, I had lobbied hard for a trim, to no effect. When we saw him yesterday, our daughter said he couldn't wait to show us. It was a good cut. Later I asked her to send us a picture.

It came in a text. I saved the photo and selected it for my phone's wallpaper. For the next day or two, I glanced at the picture dozens of times, maybe more. I wasn't so sure. He looked so different, so much older, not a new boy but a different boy.

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That day in Andrea's shop, when he emerged from the bathroom, he was wearing his hat. As we headed north on Woodward, sitting beside me in the front, he leaned over, put his head in my lap, and cried. He'd be glad, I thought.