**Dad's Skates**

They sit in the attic now, dusty, well worn, and quiet. Dad's skates. Once fast, sharp, and full of life, they now lie still, relics of a time that felt like it would never end. It is strange how something so simple, a pair of old skates, can hold so much weight, and how they can carry the echo of laughter, the crunch of blades on ice, and the warmth of a winter day long gone.

When I was young, winter was magic. It was not just about snow or cold, it was about moments that stitched themselves into the fabric of our lives. Every year, without fail, Dad would build a skating rink in our backyard. He'd start as soon as the temperature dropped, methodically laying down the base, spraying water in layers, smoothing every inch with quiet determination. No bumps, no sinkholes, just a perfect sheet of ice that reflected the sky. That rink was not just frozen water, it was time, effort, and love. It was Dad, giving us something special.

We'd spend hours out there skating, falling, laughing. And always, at the center of it all, was Dad in his skates. He moved across the ice with a kind of quiet grace. Strong strides, tight turns, and a flash of silver as his blades carved the rink he had made with his own hands. His skates weren't just objects. They were an extension of who he was, energetic, capable, present.

Then, the day would end with hot soup and red cheeks, the smell of wool mittens drying near the heater, and the quiet satisfaction of a day well spent. I did not know then how fleeting it all was. Time felt infinite. Dad felt infinite.

But time does not wait. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, things began to change. The rink didn't get built one year. Then another. Life got busy. Dad got older. His energy faded. His skates went into a box in the attic, where they've stayed ever since. Now, when I hold them, they feel heavier than they should, weighted with memory. The leather is cracked, the blades are dull, and they will never glide across a backyard rink again. And yet, in my mind, I still see them in motion. I still hear the scrape of metal on ice and the sound of his laugh echo. I still feel the cold air on my face and the comfort of knowing he was there, always there.

There is a sadness in realizing those days are gone. An ache in knowing that moments, once missed, cannot be relived. But there is also a strange kind of beauty in remembering, because those skates, even in silence, still speak. They remind me not just of who Dad was, but of what he gave us. His time, his love, and those perfect winter days.

We forget, sometimes, how precious the ordinary is. But in the stillness of the attic, with Dad's skates in hand, I remember everything.