

When I Think of My Father

When I think of my father, which I do at night, I think of his uniforms, the ones he has always worn on the faster-than-light ships that carry him through classified missions to the stars, clean and pressed, always the same, smelling of their synthetic fabric—the smell I loved when I was little. My father never changes either, and the miracle of this fills me with a peace few things can. I am the one who has changed by staying here, growing taller, becoming a young man, marrying, having children of my own, succeeding in a profession, and, finally, accepting a failing body that is ready to leave this world. But each time my father visits—and there are years between his returns—he looks at me in the same way, and I know he is seeing the child I once was, the child he has always loved, unchanged.

—Bruce McAllister

