

Alexander Riggs (8th Grade: Worthington, Ohio)
Level II Semifinalist
Letter to Jeanette Walls on her book, *Glass Circle*

Dear Jeannette Walls:

Your father was an interesting man. Many flaws, but you don't care. Fortunately, I don't connect with your childhood in many ways. My mom isn't self-absorbed, we aren't always on the run from creditors and my family isn't abusive, physically or emotionally. On the other hand, my dad drinks, he often goes out with his friends, and always wants the latest "gadgets" for himself—while my mother, brother and me are always left in the dark.

You inspire me. You inspired me to help my dad cut down on his drinking habits. To tell him, "Hey, what do you have there? Can we have one, too?" And since I read your book, the *Glass Circle*, I've expressed my worry to my dad about his drinking and how it can destroy his liver, hurt brain function, and cause distress to the family. I remember one night when my dad was to cook dinner for my brother and me. He cooked some potatoes then left to go out with some friends. I didn't eat dinner until almost 1:00 AM the next morning when my mom had to bring something home. My dad didn't return home until 2:00 AM. When we told him he was supposed to make dinner he was sincerely remorseful, but, to this day, I still remember that night.

I'm still glad to have my dad. Reading your story helped me appreciate my dad's rough childhood; actually, it was as rough as yours. He was poor. Some days he didn't eat and had to walk two miles to schools. The most saddening thing is that he never got to be with his parents for a long duration. His mother worked most of the time and his dad was in the military. Although I resent some of my dad's behaviors, I realize it's hard to be a role model, when you've never had one yourself.

Thank you for inspiring me to help me dad to atop drinking and thank you for helping me to understand why my dad is the way he is now.

Sincerely,

Alexander Riggs