

Jan Heller Levi

NOT BAD, DAD, NOT BAD | 003

I think you are most yourself when you're swimming;
slicing the water with each stroke,
the funny way you breathe, your mouth cocked
as though you're yawning.

You're neither fantastic nor miserable
at getting from here to there.
You wouldn't win any medals, Dad,
but you wouldn't drown.

I think how different everything might have been
had I judged your loving
like I judge your sidestroke, your butterfly,
your Australian crawl.

But I always thought I was drowning
in that icy ocean between us,
I always thought you were moving too slowly to save me,
when you were moving as fast as you can.

Collins, Billy, ed. Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry.
New York: Random House, 2003. Print.