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him my painfully
heavy bag

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

When the bell rang at school I always waited anxiously to hear him. He'd call my name and when I turned around I knew exactly how he'd look. I'd still stare and smile back at his crinkly smiling eyes. He'd always have his sunglasses on top of his bald head.

Immediately I'd hand him my painfully heavy bag. At that moment all my homework troubles and test woes were over. He'd ask me the usual about school and friends. Although he knew I was shy around other people and often bullied around, he'd still ask, " How many kids did you beat today at recess?" The irony of it always made me laugh.

While he drove me home he always chatted like a chirpy bird. He'd make his usual stop everyday. I knew what he'd say before leaving the car but I always looked forward to it. He'd say conspicuously, " Let me say a quick hello to my friend". I'd know exactly why he stopped but I'd play innocent.

The stop meant he was getting candies from the store. He'd return back with chocolates and colored candies smiling, and say, " My friend sent these for you". I can't ever recall him not smiling. With the greed of a 6 year old I'd peer into the big bag and immediately gobble the loot before the school bus even reached home.

I remember this particular day spent with him. While I was sitting in the backseat of the school bus and gloating over my treasure and with my mouth still full of chocolates I exclaimed, " You're the best uncle ever; you buy the best things even when I never ask you for them". He looked back at me from the rearview mirror and smiled.

But, I remember seeing something strange and wistful in his eyes. I couldn't understand it then but he said, " One day when you're all grown up and going to university, I will pass you by on the street and I will call out to you but you wont recognize your Uncle Rob...I will ask you don't you remember me? But no mater how hard you try, you won't be able to remember me".

I was mad at Uncle Rob that day. I was angry at his confidence in the future that he had never seen. I reasoned with him as much as a six year old can. He stood firm. I explained to him again and again that I see him first thing in the morning when he drops me to school and last thing before he drops me back home. This will have to continue till I'm sixty years old and don't need to go to school. He laughed sadly and shook his head in disagreement.

The school year ended and Uncle Rob stopped picking and dropping me from school. I remember laughing, arguing and played games with him. When I moved to another state at the end of the year I made a mental note to myself to remember him.

I put a flag to his memory and engraved his image in the deep recesses of my mind. I promised to never forget him. I'm almost 24 now and his memory is still flawless in my mind. But I wonder, if I'm walking on the street and come across a man with those crinkly smiling eyes and I call out his name, will he remember me?