

## **My Son**

*My instinct is to stay calm whenever an injury is announced as my son of 12 enters the room –no need to add to the distress of the situation.*

*So today when he was dropped off at our doorstep by his friend's father, I looked up without alarm. He had cut his lip, pushed into a grill when playing football with the boys. It certainly didn't look serious, but at his beckoning, I dialed the nurse on call. Best to get it checked out, was the reply, and off to the urgent care we went.*

*After much waiting and subdued pity for the other patients who appeared worse off than he, we were summoned back to the examination room. The doctor reported that it was a busy night, no reason she could think of other than a full moon. She casually reassured him that on first look it didn't appear that his lip would even need a stitch, so she would be back later.*

*We waited, he on the long table spread out on a paper sheet and me sitting next to him, trying to distract myself with a magazine.*

*When she came back, her diagnosis changed – a couple of stitches should do the trick, no worries, she could numb it up just fine. Out came the needle, long and lean, and as it pierced his lip, he moaned in pain and I silently counted the seconds, wishing for a quick end to his agony.*

*The doctor said the worst was over and I breathed a sigh of relief. Now we just had to wait a bit and she would sew him up – good as new. My son has always been one for lots of questions. After numerous volleys back and forth, I told her she might just have to cut him off or we might be there all night. She laughed, assuring me that she had plenty of time to answer all his questions and so she did.*

*Finally the nurse prepared the site of his wound and once again a long needle was laid before us. Upon the first thread through the skin of his lip, he cried out, with such sharpness I was jolted from my seat. The medical professionals told me he surely could not feel much pain, but there was my first born and only son before me and I knew he most assuredly was in a great deal of pain. They had to go on, no turning back the doctor said, with the nurse chiming in that it would be over soon. He screamed each time they dug the needle in through his skin, with blood pouring down his chin, gathering in a pool around his neck. I held his hand, squeezing so tight, the room was spinning and I was overcome with panic. I am his mother and he is suffering and I am not doing anything to help him. The tears were flowing from my eyes and when I looked over at him, I saw the large drops sliding down his boyish face.*

*When it was finally over, the nurse asked me to take him to the restroom to clean him up. He looked in the mirror, just staring at himself, like a wounded warrior. He let me dab at him a bit, but perhaps with pride over what he had just been through, he didn't want me to erase all traces of his battle. And so I let him walk out of the waiting area, with blood streaked face, holding his hand.*