

2nd prize 2018 OutStanding LGBTIQA+ Short Story Competition

Barbarism Begins at Home by Trevor Steverink

I went to a bastard of a school in the rural heartland. Red brick and concrete caverns surrounded by rugby fields and sheep paddocks. It had stood for a hundred years and it stank of tradition. Pictures of the Old Boys, fading black and whites, hung from wall to wall in the hallways. The First Fifteen through the ages, a miserable and unhappy lot, trapped in time and dark heavy frames. Rugby and agriculture defined the school.

The boarders ran the school, fed on the slaughter from their farms, destined to excel like their fathers and to master the land. Us townies that failed the school, became their farm hands or their killers, in bloodied white overalls in the meat works. Some, only a few, escaped to the city behind the mountain ranges.

Us townies, small rough and tumble boys, products of mediocrity, still in love with our mothers, watched on, as the boarders dominated the rugby fields. I watched on as they tumbled and fell on each other, dominating and submitting. I desired their muscled thighs, their broad shoulders, their power and force as they ran.

There was a boy at school, a bitter and angry boy, who knew of my desires. He was a vicious tongued abuser, quick with vile brutality "you odious dwarf, you crippled queer, it's the meat works for you, you're never leaving this town."

He stalked me, became my only friend and my protector. He would spit out foul abuse to others as if only he had the authority to insult and abuse me. He had no fear of embarrassment, never hesitating to call a faggot a faggot.

I escaped the school. I escaped the bloated cows and the slaughterhouses. I became a city boy. My friend and protector chased me down, yelling abuse, whenever I felt strong and free. It was a violent battle, I almost lost, gave up, surrendered to his snarling, stifling authority.

He hated my Gothic blacks and piercings. He hated my new friends. He hated my freedom and the loss of control he held over me. We would fight, he would throw insults and abuse and I would shut him down by blasting the house with The Smiths. I bashed his ear-drums with their words, more powerful than his pathetic whinging and whining.

"The boy with the thorn in his side

behind his hatred there lies

a plundering desire for

love."

One night, we fought for the last time. I was drunk. I was angry. He had me screaming abuse outside a bar. I yelled faggots, faggots, faggot. I choked on those words as they left my mouth, I fell into the gutter, stinking of shame, tobacco and vomit.

I told him to fuck off and as I sobbed, he didn't leave. He sat with me and heard and finally accepted my confession. He found compassion for me, for us and that night, my bully and I become one, a young gay man, ready to move on to the next big thing in my life.