

Sex on Other People's Lawns

by Gary Justis

tower and lawn

Allegations are sometimes leveled towards overly curious young boys. When a youngster's actions are misinterpreted, usually in the context of adult values, a hellish retribution ensues. This can destroy

wide-eyed intentions, and the faultless mining of harmless deeds...ones that, in actuality, destroy nothing, erase young fears, and offer proofs of a superb humanity and the providence of manliness.

Miss Dolan was the tallest woman we had ever seen living...we had seen Amazons in comic books; they crafted war against evil, holding bad men in headlocks, throwing spears and winning contests against the rougher sex. We understood all of this happened long before Attila The Hun, George Washington and all those "old historic guys."

Miss Dolan was different, in the way she wore her hair in tight curls, and in the way she swung her long, well toned arms as she walked so flawlessly across the classroom. Her dress would follow the grace of her movements as if the cloth had taken an oath to meld itself into her flesh, worshiping, in sacred prayers, the miracle of her skin's deep golden hue, and intoxicating aroma.

When her eyes flashed during her discussions of History, the whitewashed room almost seemed to flush crimson in reaction to the blushing schoolboys. A finer beauty had never paced those floors, had never delivered our lessons with a voice that could have talked King George and his court into moving to America. Our history class became a period of solemn worship, with the woman of our childish fantasies, our bronze goddess, painting our desires in broad swaths across our faces as she met each of our eyes in turn.

I could desire her for days, while ignoring the details of other activities happening around me. In my daydreams, the images of her filled the breadth of my vision, with the lilting sound of her voice, and the revelation of sunlight on her skin. She maximized tenfold, the fascination I had for some of the older girls attending the high school up the street. Miss Dolan seemed to sense the intensity of my emotional yearning, and in the brief moments our eyes would make contact, I felt the flare of those emotions might cause me to burst. What a fortunate mess I imagined myself becoming, with the goddess of my days and nights, heartsick, as she lovingly scooped up the parts.

I tried to gather information about her from the older kids, but after a few questions, they would ask me why I wanted to know. I kept a notebook of things Miss Dolan said to me, trying to figure out if she was delivering me sentences with secret meanings. Understanding everything about her became my surreptitious mission, until I realized the parallel desires of my buddies.

The period bell came way too fast during this sacred hour of the day, but when it tolled, we fell out onto the lawn of the school yard, captivated, not concerned about the other classes letting out to start the obligatory recess basketball games. We felt our interest in the sport become less important as the year went on, so in the interim, between the tasks of winning esteem and growing muscle mass, we exchanged ideas and fantasies about how to get Miss Dolan's attention.

"Let's see if she will tell us, well maybe show us, how people have sex!"

Skeeter was the kid who blurted out with the things we were all thinking about...all the time.

We all desired to know this stuff, but even at that early age, many of us understood the importance of tact and innocence as a strategy in getting grownups to do things, especially answering questions about sex.

"If she did that, the principal and school board would fire her or something. Anyhow, she has a boyfriend...well, I think she does anyway, so he might not want her talking about that stuff to us."

I really thought her boyfriend might be jealous of us. We were a collection of clueless shit-heads, who didn't even know what the word "intercourse" meant. We were of the age where we still believed women got pregnant from kissing guys.

"She's too classy for that. Grownups don't talk about sex unless they know kids aren't around. They think it will make us goofy or something."

George was listening, and with the look on his face, I could tell his mind was constructing a scheme that would not only get Miss Dolan's attention, but would be a big blast for us at the same time.

At our age, and from our errant judgment, all attempts at turning a beautiful woman's mind our way were acts of daring, with outcomes that were beyond our imaginations; and there was always a measure of danger.

Although we really wanted Miss Dolan to think of us as desirable suitors, we misunderstood the need for high marks in her History class. We were too horny to even consider how true intelligence might capture her curiosity. We were a rough and rather crude lot, and we actually believed she was of the same mind.

George finally spoke.

"We need to write something on her lawn. You all remember she's a pilot, and she told us about how she likes to fly on Sundays. She likes to go over her house after she takes off. We can write something neat, and she will get a kick out of that!"

Some of the boys were a little confused. Billy was thinking about the idea.

"Whatever we write, it has to be big...we could spray-paint something, but all the grownups in town would get real mad. You remember how mad they got when Paul painted the church last Halloween?"

I wanted to forget Halloween. We all got in trouble for Paul's stupid crap, and after that incident, all of us were not allowed to use spray-paint...ever.

Then I remembered how grass on a lawn could be marked if you placed something on the surface on a hot day. Something like... a brick, or a shingle.

"I know! We can write something by laying black shingles on the grass. My Dad has a pile of them."

Everyone agreed, but George shook his head.

"No G, we can't leave the shingles on her lawn, people will know you did it."

I was a little ahead of George with my plan.

"I know. We put the shingles on the grass just as the sun goes down on Saturday, and take them off before the sun comes up on Sunday. No one will see us, and it will make the grass lie down and

turn a little brown from the heat. I saw it on our yard. It makes a really clear mark on the grass.”

George smiled. I was always grateful when one of my ideas struck him.

“Geeze...that's smart G. No evidence, as long as we do it in the dark.”

Two of us would do the act, but all of us would decide what to write. There were five of us, and out of our group, there were five ideas.

Skeeter wanted to write “Penis.”

Dan made a case for “Hello.”

Billy wanted “William.”

I was puzzled why he would want to put his own name on the lawn.

“William?”

Billy was smirking. He coughed a little.

“I dunno...I just thought it might be better than “Love, or Penis”, or something like that I guess.”

George looked at Billy and rolled his eyes. “We should write your phone number shit-head!”

I was beginning to think we might have to do the unthinkable: Ask the older kids what to write. We discussed it and none of us wanted to do that. This would bring the big kids into the plan and the secret of who did the deed would be reported before it even happened.

We all thought the writing could be an entire sentence, but after we discussed it, we all agreed it should just be a word, because we didn't want Miss Dolan to keep her eyes off the airplane's course very long, it might make her crash.

George straightened after we were silent for a few seconds.

“Well, with the way she looks at all of us all the time, I think she might like it if we wrote something really nasty.”

This puzzled me at first, then I remembered a conversation with my brother. He said Miss Dolan liked to call all the boys in her classes, “My little Cubs.”

We all thought she was referring to Cub Scouts. Most of us were in a local Cub Pack, and we naturally assumed she wanted to be a Den Mother or something. We all wished very hard that we could see her in that dark blue Den Mother dress at our den meetings. We did get a good sense that she was fascinated, in a strange way, with all of us.

“George, she looks at everybody that way. She likes guys. My brother said she looks at him and his buddies the same way. They call it the ‘sensual look’, like she’s daydreaming about kissing us and stuff.”

Billy was reading something on a scrap of paper. He looked up and said, “Let’s watch her get naked. I memorized her address... wrote it down yesterday. I think she leaves her curtains open.”

George rolled his eyes really wide this time.

“That’s against the law asshole! You wanna tell your mom and dad about what you did when they get a call from Sheriff Yarkey? Dumbshit!”

I knew there had to be something we could write that would get noticed and not get us in trouble.

“I know! We’ll write ‘SEX’ on the grass in her yard. And we won’t be wreaking anything. The squished grass won’t hurt nuthin’ and it will go away in a few days.”

George smiled again. I knew we’d go with this idea.

After a sweltering day, Saturday night was hot and humid. George was excited; I was nervous, but charged up and ready. George carried about 20 shingles. He was complaining of the heat they were giving off. I had around 20 gathered in my arms. They were burning my hands, forearms, and creasing into my side as we ran several blocks to Miss Dolan’s house. Streetlights framed the ends of her street, with her house in the center. It was dark at 9:30, and we noticed the lights were out in the two houses that flanked either side of Miss Dolan’s house.

The lawn fell away from the sidewalk to a low grade, making it very difficult to see the surface of her yard from a car on the street. This was to our advantage. We were fully aware the Sheriff wouldn't be able to see the shingles when he made the rounds that evening. If he came around in the next few minutes, we could lie flat and he wouldn't see us as well.

We had enough shingles to do a fine job on most of the word, but we soon realized we were a little short on our material. We agreed the "S" and the "X" were the most important. We had enough material left to do the "E", but it would have to be a lower case "e." the word was about ten feet across, by four feet wide. We were confident it could be seen from a plane. It looked good from a few feet away. We agreed to come back and remove the shingles at 4:30 the next morning. We both also agreed it was great how the moon was not shining and the streetlamps were far away.

4:30 am came fast. With my reflex at hitting the alarm button, I made a large slapping sound, but after a few seconds, I heard no other sounds in the house. I pulled on my jeans and shirt, and grabbing my tennis shoes, I slipped out the back door, careful not to let it slam shut.

George was in the yard as I arrived, he had moved the shingles into two piles, we gathered them up and ran back to my house. We could barely breathe between the giggling. We shook hands. George went home. I slipped back into my room and got into bed.

Someone was squeezing my shoulder, shaking me vigorously...my eyes seemed welded shut, and I tried to break away so I could pry open my eyes. I realized I was still in bed and my brother was shaking me.

"Hey, numb-nuts! Mom wants us to go to church today...get up snake-dick!"

I rolled off the top bunk and my feet hit the floor with a thumping sound that broadcasted the unconscious condition of my legs from the knees down. I crumpled and fell, laughed a little as the pins and needles in my feet wickered a tickling sensation up my calves. It was gone in a few seconds and I limped to the kitchen.

Mom was making pancakes.

"Sheriff Yarkey was down by that teacher's house this morning. George, do you know what it was all about?"

My dad shrugged, and my brother, facing me with his back to my parents, sneered slightly. We ate quickly and all of us began dressing for church.

My brother and I shared a room.

"Did you and your piss-ant friends mark up Miss Dolan's yard?"

"I don't know what you're talking about...what happened?"

My brother made a crooked smile.

"Someone tried to write something. It's hard to tell what it is. I looked from the street, but it's too messed up."

"Crap!" I thought. If it was messed up, then the joke is lost and it's just vandalism. I thought about calling George after church.

I called George's house five times that day, finally giving up when my brother reminded me George's family had gone to the lake for the remainder of the afternoon. I was anxious, and worried, with the unexpressed energy of a guilty, scared kid.

"Why are you pacing fuck-nuts?"

My brother was standing in the doorway to my room.

"I don't feel so good. I feel sick to my stomach."

He came closer to me and whispered.

"I won't tell, scout's honor...I just don't understand why you guys wrote what you did."

I tried to act puzzled.

"What are you talking about?"

George met me the next day at the front of the school. His face was ashen, and his eyes very large.

"G, there's an assembly this morning. I saw Miss Dolan talking to the principal. She's pissed!"

I felt my throat begin to close. Both of us turned and walked in, and ascended the stairs to the gym. We saw it was packed, so we started up the side stairs to the wrap-around balcony. We sat

forward with our arms against the railing, waiting for the teachers to address the crowd. I looked over the railing onto the floor and saw Skeeter and Billy looking up at us. They waved. We didn't see Dan, so we thought he was either sick, or trying to be invisible.

George nudged me and pointed down at Miss Dolan, who was waving at me and gesturing for me to come down to the gym floor. My chest had that strange tight, scratchy feeling as I descended the stairs. Miss Dolan met me at the last step, placed her hand gently on my shoulder and led me to the entrance to the gym. We stood just out of sight of the crowd. She had a very stern look on her face. I could hear her grinding her teeth. She clamped my chin in her hand and forced me to look at her eyes. I was frightened almost to the point of paralysis.

“So, you scurvy gummed little asshole! Did you and your confederates mess up my lawn with your smut? You sneaky little fucks! You'll see what happens piss-ant...you'll see what happens to horny little ass-wipes like you and your buddies. I should spank your skinny little asses really hard! Now go back to your seat. I have to address everyone.

I wanted to bolt, but my legs were so weak; I felt the sudden erosion of the sacred domain that contained my most cherished fantasies. I could barely ascend the stairs. I sat back down next to George as the microphone squawked.

The principal spoke briefly, and then turned the podium over to Miss Dolan.

“People, over the years, I have found a student body in this school that I could not be prouder of...no, not by any stretch. But when young people do not care enough to pay attention to details, in our lessons, in our interactions with family, friends, teachers and colleagues, I am disappointed; because attention to details and seeing the importance of information is essential to a young person's education.

That is one of the things that have made our nation great.

For example, we have seen it in the actions of our sports heroes. How many of us have watched Roger Maris as he plowed towards

Babe Ruths record in 1961? Do you think Mr. Maris got to the Majors by not knowing what he was doing? He didn't become great by himself, He listened to his coach, watched the pitchers of the other teams, and paid attention to the things that count.

I'm speaking today, to point out a bad example of what I'm talking about. Some individual, or group of individuals made a big, misguided effort to write something on my lawn. This happened over the weekend...a word was written in letters so large, that my flight instructor and I could see it from our airplane as we circled over town. I was shocked, and when we circled again to get a better look, the effort put us dangerously low. It scared us both very much. I am hurt that some individuals would write something horrendous, that seen in reference to me, is unspeakable. I want to make something clear to this student body today, and I want you all to listen well and remember this. I have never been, nor will I ever, under any circumstances...be a SOX fan. I am a CUBS fan, and will forever pray at the alter of Wrigley field."

George and I looked at each other. I felt blood returning to my extremities.

Miss Dolan continued.

"Now to the boys, and I can be pretty sure the deed was done by a group of boys, I want to say thanks for the thoughtful tribute to a great team. It just doesn't happen to be my team...it's just that I prefer the way Cubs swing their little bats..."

At the time, I didn't know why I heard a few gasps in the crowd after Miss Dolan gave her closing statement. None of us caught it until my brother explained it to me much later.

Most of the kids made polite applause, then there was some cheering and whistles from some of the athletes in the crowd.

In the midst of the noise, George leaned closer to me.

"She's a goddamn baseball fan. Now I think she's really hot! What did she say to you in the hall?"

"She knows everything George, everything. She knows what we really wrote, she knows how horny we are for her. Man!... She cusses! She scares me..."

George sat up straight and suddenly became very serious.

“Hey man, I guess it worked.”

I had a few unfamiliar emotions taking control as I tried to pull myself together. I was frightened, and attracted at the same time. The conflicting emotions were tantalizing.

“Yeah better than we thought it would.”

We looked back towards the floor; Billy and Skeeter were looking up at us, but we barely noticed. Miss Dolan was looking at George. A moment later her eyes caught mine. She winked, then turned and nodded at the principal, spun around and glided toward the door to the gym, with the auspicious fabric of her dress, once again, following the elegance of her motion.

Lawn and figure

