

Father Dunne's School for Wayward Boys #10

by Kyle Hemmings

I'm standing on a toilet, trapped behind a stall. Watching Father U mop up the blood. It belonged to Father C. He had died that morning. In class, we were told by Father Dunne that Father C. had "passed away." Father Dunne looked flustered, at a loss for more words. Father C. taught most of the art courses and some woodworking. He was timid and spoke with the least amount of words, as if indecent syllables were stuck in his throat. He once broke up a fight in the hallway in Main Building and was accidentally, or maybe not so accidentally, punched in the face. He seemed shaken for days. Some of the guys on my kickball team wondered whether Father C. had committed suicide. Others said he might have lost his faith or questioned it too much. I never question what is in front of me, like his blood and Father U. trying to clean it up and maybe afterwards, spraying some lemon-scented mist so nothing will be quite clear. I, for one, believed Father C. was bullied by some of the other more "athletic" priests, constantly poked in the ribs, or made fun of after a shower. Father C. rarely smiled and if he did, it was a chicken wing bone of a smile. I kind of liked him, the way he held the whole chaotic world within himself. Father U. glances back and I duck behind the stall. But I lose my balance and am now standing in pee-colored water. My own. The door swings open and Father U. says "What were you doing? Watching me? Is mopping a floor that interesting to you?" I clear my throat and step out of the toilet. My eyes, as if a will all their own, veer to the faint blood stains, still present on the floor, like some mysterious artwork. Father C's. "No, Father," I say in a quivering voice, "but maybe God is watching us all."

