

Wilbur

by Parker Tettleton

This girl who looks about ten years old and her Pomeranian puppy are staring at my left arm and my right hand keeps filling out the form and I know I shouldn't but I say what she's been begging me to for the last half hour: It wasn't Wilbur. It was a woman. A girl, actually. Just like you.

Her eyes widen but not as much as her mouth, full of bright pink braces: Wilbur? Is that his name? Why'd she do it, mister? This is Sally, by the way. I'm Molly.

Molly and Sally, I go.

Wilbur's tail is tucked under his stomach. His paws are crossed. He's snoring. He doesn't know what he's missing, that petite little bitch straight across the hall.

Well, Molly, I go, then stop. I should really watch what I'm writing, I say.

Wilbur's a pig's name, Molly says.

That's what she said, I go. I mean, yes, it was, until the pig died, I say before I can stop myself.

Molly looks away, back. I keep writing. Wilbur, I go, it's time to wake up.

What's wrong with him, Molly whispers.

Nothing that hasn't happened before, I go, just a bad case of the shits.

Mister! Molly's eyes are even wider now.

Wilbur wakes up, farts. Knock it the fuck off, I go. Molly thinks I mean her.

Her chin dips, cheeks puff bright red. Her eyes begin to sparkle with tears and the smell of this place reminds me of another place where my father burned his last cigarette, took my hand with the butt still in his palm, of Wilbur as a puppy, before he learned to shit outside and I'd spanked him and left him in the laundry room half of the night and his howling kept us up until I placed him at the foot of our bed and last night, with Wilbur back in the laundry room stoned on Budweiser and meatloaf, when you took the tumbler glass pieces to my skin and I woke to you repeating, Why should I be fucked?

