

Middletown, N.Y  
Middletown High School  
Them talkin bout Harry Hawthorn, poet I think...  
(MD 20/20 buzz)

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English: Mrs. Kelly  
12<sup>th</sup> grade

© At times, it all comes back to me so clearly. One day I was a child immersed in the joys of carefree hours. I used to bury my green plastic army men in the dirt right under a fence in my small yard. Days later, I dug them up. I played that game a lot then, hiding things and then digging them up.

I didn't have a lot of friends then. I had one good friend, but I hurt him. All the other kids on the block knew what went on in our house. They treated us with pity, like wounded kittens. I hated them for that. They were friends out of charity, not care. From the way they looked at me and my sister, it was clear they knew truths about us.

This led to a lot of games I created for one. I always felt I wanted just one true friend. As foster children we moved a lot. True friends take time to develop. I never had enough time. Basically, I grew up alone on the schoolyards. Sure, I played all the games: stickball, handball, basketball, baseball, street hockey, Chinese boxball, stoop ball, and on. I played them all well. I played them very well.

When it came time to play other games, I wouldn't play. Street teams were often two or three. Sometimes boys with girls. I felt uneasy being near people of any age back then. I felt inferior. Due to the dark abuses of the system, I could never trust anyone enough. Now, as I look back on those times and feelings, I realize many wounds have not healed.

I still carry the insecurities and uncertainties. No one really tries to get in anymore. They just accept me for being the way I am. Which makes it harder to

effect a possible change. No one realizes how in need I am of another being.

I live in this byproduct prison. The games are the same. It's just that the victims have changed. I am a victim of all I never learned to share. It becomes a vicious cycle of reaching out and not being able to touch someone. The way you mean to touch them.

So it goes on-and-on through prayer and failure. I have never given up hope though, as many others I met along the way have done. Giving in or giving up is such a shallow temptation. Yesterday, I buried my toy soldiers in the dirt. Today, I bury my despair, never to return to dig it up.

P.S. I am failing English. Again.

