

A Southern Delight

By Donovan Russo

“We can beat this... Lord knows we can,” Pa raised his Bourbon, as if doing so was the equivalent to a prayer.

“I know Lucy’s cousin had a similar condition,” Ma began to twirl her potatoes and green beans together. “He had been living in that dreaded city, was going to one of them fancy schools. Apparently, they corrupted him on that devil’s street... What’s it called?”

“Asbury?” Pa tilted back in his chair, popping a tooth pick in his mouth.

“No! That’s that God awful New Jersey, where the people have them’ big hairs,” she drank a sip of her milk, which came from one of their goats out back. “It’s in New York... Carmen Street... Chrysler Street... No!” She now pointed at her son—who sat with the look of death on his face. “Christopher Street! He was prancin’ around on that Christopher Street! Met a few *Mary’s* who was a bad influence...”

“What they end up doing to him?” Pa sat forward again—taking the tooth pick out of his mouth.

“They pulled him out, brought em’ back home, put him right into shock therapy... and now, he’s better than ever,” she pointed at her son again. “He’s got five kids in the litter box, a loving wife, and a job on Lucy’s brother’s farm...”

“That could be you,” Pa tapped his son’s arm, nodding as he put that tooth pick back in his mouth. The boy sighed as he looked in the other direction—scratching the scruff that covered his hardened face.

“There’s also conversion therapy,” Ma shoved some pot roast down her pie hole.

“Brady’s friend’s cousin went into that... They found him dry humpin’ the neighbor—threw him into this church program—It was ran by their minister!”

“And how he’d turned out?” Pa ditched his tooth pick—opting to pick his canines with a fork.

“Last I heard, all he does is dry hump women now...”

“See, son? It’s just a cork in the screw!” Pa laughed and patted his son on the shoulder.

“Nothin’ to be ashamed of...”

“Nothin’ at all,” Ma grabbed her boy’s hand. “As your daddy said, we can beat this.”

The boy looked at both of them: their eyes filled with concern and their hearts broken—as if he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer in his asshole—resulting in six final months of abrupt-uncontrollable shitting... He put his head down and began to nod.

“Wow. Well... these stories are really inspirational, Ma,” he continued to nod as she smiled—proud of her ability to tell a story. “Do you know of anyone else who has undergone some sort of aggressive- sexual metamorphosis?”

“*Meta* what?” Pa scratched his head.

“Why don’t you just borrow a cross from cousin Eddy... perform a crucifixion on me?”

“You know the *Ku Klux* doesn’t just hand out crosses, honey,” Ma smiled.

“Well, we could tell them it’s urgent...” Pa mumbled...

He started to glare at his pa, trying to summon the courage to strangle the bastard with his own two hands. I mean, hey, at least *Daddy Killer* wasn’t as bad as being a *Mary*, right?

“Not an actual crucifixion!” Pa raised his hands in defense. “But it may be good to get you on that thing for a few minutes—it may clear your mind...”

The boy chugged his glass of milk—which came from one of their cows in the south-east wing of his family’s ranch—he wasn’t allowed to drink the Goat milk... He then looked around his folk’s kitchen, eyeing the confederate flag that draped over the window by the sink, the *Love Thy Neighbor* quote that was engraved into the silver flask that Pa kept the whisky in, and the picture of his folks at a *Klan* rally—after Obama was elected president.

“What’s on ya mind, honey?” Ma refilled his glass of milk. “I see those peepers wanderin’...”

He watched as she smiled widely, revealing her beet stained-bucked teeth—not realizing at all how fucking ugly she was. His eyes then turned to Pa, who was one piece of pot roast away from a heart attack—which would truly doom him in this hell hole—as by tradition, a man’s son always gets the farm. But it couldn’t get to that. He had to get out before that...

“You’re not thinkin’ about that boy you was with, are you?” Pa held his breath—terrified of the possibility.

“Why do you even put those thoughts in his head?” Ma slammed her hand on the table.

He felt as if his lungs were going to collapse. There was a frog in his throat. An arrow in his heart. If in private, he would let the waterfall release from his eyes... but instead, he took a breath, and looked around the kitchen, at the southern delight which was his *home*—assuring himself (as he often did) what the truth really was. So, then he smirked.

“Yes, yes I am,” he looked at his folks as they grabbed their chests, heart broken by the news. “We havin’ monkey sex as we speak...”