

SINISTER AGE OF THE DRAFT

When I turned six I became victim to one of the many human abuses of dumping a child out of the back of a station wagon into the snot-filled clutches of a pack of anonymous kids. It was an enforced group dynamics that came with all its paranoids, masochists and victims for no other reason than that we had turned the same sinister age of the draft, and as it was a Catholic school in the early sixties, abuse was not only condoned, but expected at any and all levels.

The teacher was a myopic, old woman with a pink barrette and brown teeth who spent a large portion of her day trying to figure out what her pension would be if she quit that afternoon, punching numbers into an adding machine, picking it up and sneering at it as reality spread bitterness over her face, while we were left to ourselves -a sort of Lord of the Flies meets Mickey Mouse -in which the forces of evil press in on the good like white bread on peanut butter. The so-called good, a weak but whiny lot who actually clung to that abstract of "justice for all," would tattle to Mrs. Pufry. "...Mzz Puffy, she hit me...Mzz Puffy he said the bad word...Mzz Puffy, I gotta go...Mzz Puffy, Thomas is hanging in the cloakroom again..." and Mrs. Pufry's hand would absently lash out at the sniveling chorus and shoo them back to their seats without looking up, including the one who had to go, who was now shamed into retreat with the rest of them, finding out early in life that time was never