

Steve Cartwright

At School I was a Fool



At school I was a fool
Cartwright, surely there must be something you can do
With girls I was a wreck
Great mounds of boils and blackheads bubbled on my face and neck
And when I got to talk to girls I fancied on my own
A shyness like a beetroot lit me up
And things called words that used to skip and scatter off my tongue with mum at home
Would wither on my lips
As if a plague had struck me dumb
And only Oooh's and Ahh's and grunts would tumble out
Or comments that were so inane
I'd wish the ground would eat me up.

My pubes had me bemused
While other folk went bald, or sprouted gardens on their bums and backs and chest
My loins lay naked 'neath my Y-fronts and my vest till I was 22
And while the Smiths' and Jones' sported cocks like marrows dangling down between their knees
Mine took one look
And
As if intimidated by the view
Recoiled and shrank back in
A dismal sort of scrotal winkle
Nay,
A cocktail sausage with the end pushed in
Which
With a splash of water in the shower
Could all but disappear
Become a sort of microbe in the penile scheme of things
At best a farting little titchy thing. At worst, you'd wonder if 'twas even worth me piddling through

But then at night when Mary came to haunt my dreams
With parted kitten lips
Her satin PT knickers ruffled at the crotch
T'would roar back up
As hard as rock
A slab of solid granite bursting at the touch
And raging at the pillow
'til the joy of each and every thrust
relieved a tidal ecstasy of lust
that left me spent and trembling in the seedy fluid of my sex.

At sport I was a fart
Too many Park Drives in the bike shed saw to that
And mates
Just two or three
The others took the piss
And tried to make a fool of me
And so on Sat'days when the rugby bus came rolling back
They'd strip me naked on the back seat of the bus
And fling my pants out of the windows
As I trotted off up Belle Vue Road
Confused and angry
Sometimes close to tears but trying hard to laugh it off
Their taunts still ringing in my ears
As I skipped here and there a gathering my belongings up.

The vain attempts I made to shake this image off
With hindsight
Probably made me more ridiculous
I'd carry Johnny's spanking futurama back to school for him
As though somehow 'twas me that owned this red and thrusting phallic thing
Or else I'd pillion on his bike and take the helmet everywhere I'd go
To make it look as though 'twas me that had a bike
And folk would think that I was cool and everything you know.

At home I was a crone
The only place that I could rant and rage and moan
And so my mother watched me grow
From peachy ruffled choirboy in my surplus and my purple robe
Into a rabid monster leaping from the jaws of Hell
And pawing at my pocked and bursting skin
Forever in the mirror trying to find the pose
To make myself look sexy in
And ranting like a fool at you
The one and only person in my world that ever really loved me true.