

bandinetto

by Dan Sicoli

three years between teenagers is an unnegotiable chasm
so when an older bandi bullied up to our homemade plate
interrupting our neighborhood pick-up game
blinks couldn't refuse his demand for a pitch

bandi swung his popeye arms and
bashed our softball over the fence and
into mr. marrasorro's dreaded backyard
where anyone would risk getting kicked in the ass
after his caged hunting hounds would surely
bark and cause a stir alerting all to a trespasser

alas, the game was over and bandi mocked us
bony teens and tweens as he walked off

we all muttered our mantra under our breath
promising to "*piss* on his grave
piss on the sonuvabitch's grave"
this became routine all summer
whenever he passed by

mr. marrasorro acquired
quite a collection of balls

the following year
i turned thirteen
and tried out for little league
i surprisingly made the team
as their premier bench-warmer
ironically it was the same team
where bandi shined as the star player

i didn't get much action
but during one particular game
after we had a comfortable seven-run lead
i smacked a double and slid into second base
catching an older player's ankle

as i stood and dusted myself off
he knocked me back to the dirt
but before i could react
bandi immediately sprung from the dugout
hellbent for vengeance
to defend a teammate
and fattened the rival player's lip

amazed and impressed
i exchanged smiles with him
as both teams skirmished

a few years after graduation a drunk bandi
fell out of a public works excavator
and broke his neck
not far from our old neighborhood park

i never did defile that grassy plot

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