The Wallburg Baptist Cemetery

Random*
The Wallburg Baptist Cemetery

I: The Field
This is where the Baptists come when they finish dying. Laid out between parsonage and pulpit, this dead field of souls and stones sporadically springs flowering to life, blooming for a few appropriate afternoons. Then, the trappings gone, the ground sets about healing the fresh wound in its side.

Season

by season, the cemetery encroaches on our Sunday evening youth-group football field. Some old person— I knew her face and name, but not at the same time—caught her death from dying and slumbers in the shadow of paydirt.

Over there, beside his brother, they buried my friend—Brendy, as children, later B.B., finally Brendle—fittingly where he can watch the games; do they still play here in the space death has left them? In Little League, I ruined his football career with a well-executed practice hit to the knee. News of his passing was given to me on my happy nineteenth birthday. His parents became my Prayer-Parents after their parenthood was stolen, after I quit the field.
II: Monument

Bordered by parsonage,
gray-stone sanctuary, brick
fellowship hall, harvest-golden
field, and the concrete
course of Wallburg Road,
slowing to meet Highway 109 to Thomasville,
or Winston-Salem...

In five years,
or ten, death’s annexation
will be complete,
Testament to the triumph of monument-
makers. Turkey buzzards, circling
patiently beyond the bell-
tolls, they bide their
time until friends and family finish
flocking with food and condolence,
have stayed long enough
and leave. Then, their pockets full of brochures,
their hands full of their hats and somber,
they swoop down
to honor the deceased.

III: Dominion

This is where

Baptists come when they finish dying.
When this field is full, their
dominion will be complete.
There will be another.

- Random