

A Bildungsroman

Once there was a boy who through childhood did as his mother and father told him, and, on his own accord took to reading.

As the boy grew he worked the crop with his father and continued his studies whenever he could.

Proving to have a keen mind he gained permission from his father to leave the farm and go away on his own to study at the university.

He packed his bags and left for the city for the first time. For even such a studied young man there was still much to be learned of the world.

Finding work and quarters was difficult but he managed rather quickly.

Within the week of being in the city he found the university, which was like a structure like no other he had ever seen. The building had tall steeples on its roofs and its gates were as grandiose as the age old trees rooting the courtyard.

After speaking with the university officials they, "regrettably could not accept him because his credentials were impressive but inefficient."

Expressing that he understood returned to his quarters and sat for a while.

He thought hard of every possibility and in the end he decided that he would stay in the city and continue his academic pursuits.

After a year of hard studying he went back to the university. When speaking with the officials again they, "regrettably could not accept him because his credentials were more impressive than before but that he was inexperienced."

Expressing that he did not understand their reasoning they gave no further reply. At this he dolefully returned to his quarters and sat for a while.

He thought of the possibilities and decided he will continue to stay in the city and work hard.

Nights of study began to be replaced by nights at the pub and eventually more nights at the pub.

One night after returning from the pub he lay on his bed and stared at his shelves of books. Many he could recite word for word even in his drunken state. He cursed the university and threw...up.

After spitting and heaving in his receptacle he wiped his mouth and sat for a while.

Many months went by and eventually he felt lost and alone. His dreams of collegiate knowledge had vanished and had been replaced with stupor.

One sober evening after work he sat on the edge of his bed and read a postcard from home. His mother was sick and his father had sent for him to come home. After reading the letter he was outraged and wished it wasn't true. Getting up from his bed he grabbed his dirty coat and left for the pub.

Over a week had gone by since the letter from home and then one morning he woke up to banging on the door. His landlord was evicting him for nonpayment of rent.

Packing his things he quit his job directly and left the city.

Returning home he discovered his mother was more ill than he could have imagined and though his father was in good health he looked as though he was just as ill if not worse.

After sitting by his mother's bedside for hours he grabbed the flask out of his bag and went to an old tree he used to read under when he was younger. Sitting at its base he pulled the flask out of his pocket and took a long swig of the smooth stuff. Tilting the bottom up a few more times he leaned deep against the tree and sat for a while.

Thinking on everything that had happened over the past couple of years he sat there letting his mind swim into anger.

He thought about the writers of the books that gave him nothing but useless information and hated them! He thought about the university and how they denied him the right to be better! He thought about the city and how it turned him into a working drunkard! He thought about loneliness and illness and wished they would both die!

Sulking against that old tree he drowned the hate until he was very sad. He looked on the familiar sites around him and the reminiscence of what he saw made him sadder, for it reminded him of a simpler time.

Then, he thought about his mother and her being in her illness. He thought about his father and how he is still working the crop while taking care of her. He thought about the crop itself and how it had got so rundown over the last couple of years. He thought about all of this and wished they would all live!

Just then, he pushed himself off of the ground and stood leaning against the tree. He looked at the silver flask in his hand and unscrewed its top and poured the last of its contents to the ground. Cocking back he then threw the flask into a thicket as far as he could.

As he stood at the edge of his family's crop he came to the revelation, "I'm not the only one here."