Butch and Wawa Robert E. Jordan

Scars Publications 2004 chapbook Butch and Wawa is a collection of urban poems. Some of the poems have already been published.

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Butch and Wawa Get Born

Our neighborhood is so unique, so European in its architecture, so old-worldish in its row houses, so urban, devoid of lawns or porches. People study us and how we live, so close together, so a part of the whole, of our own provincial world.

Things happen in our Catholic hood, even in the cold wintertime, when things are supposed to die, but don't.

Butch was born on Laurel Street, Wawa born on Olive, hungry little streets, crooked and narrow, filled with dirty snow. Wawa's skinny Mom cries, moans and screams alone, pushes him out, cuts the cord. She wraps him in a tattered blanket, puts her pink babe to her breast and doesn't look back.

[i] "Writers Hood", Published 2001

Two wails of childbirth filled the night, penetrated thin rowhouse walls. Icy screams set the night air shivering; hanging streetlights swayed wire mesh shadows up, down the snow covered streets.

Butch's fat dad was in the kitchen, drinking beer because he did. Sissy was up the bedroom tending to May, while she yelled and grunted. Dad, disturbed, hollers up the stairs; "Hey keep it down up there for Christ sake, you trying to wake the dead or what."

Butch and Wawa Do Dinner

Butch's Dad sits big and hairy, thumps the table; wants more feed. Wipes grease off snarling chops, glares at Butch, sidewise throws empty can, demands more beer, he better get it. Belches, hollers, demands attention, he pays the bills, he's the man.

Dirty Butch sits fat and wide, dead stares blaring TV; Howdy Doody doesn't care. Patch haired cat up the table nibbles fat scraps while brown rat sits the corner, waits to make his move.

Fat Mom fetches beer, slops beef; boiled potatoes piled high the plate. Butch thinks he needs more too.

Next door small pale Wawa sits his skinny rump, spoon's day old soup off the bottom, dips his daily soft pretzel, waits for Mom to come off the street.

Mom's OK, she works hard. Wawa treats her nice, he knows he's all she's got, they're a tight team you know. Unlike another single child, Wawa's not mollycoddled in Lucy's smothering bosom. She lets him run free the street learn what it's all about. Lucy wants him strong and shrewd; when she beats him, it's only to make him tough.



Butch and Wawa Meet

Lucy sends him the store down the corner, he has a quarter; and a can of lard for the war, help blow-up some krauts. Wawa comes out the house; he's a small five.

Wawa puts the lard the barrel, walks home past Butch's place, gets hit the head with sharp brick, and it will leave a scar, Wawa still has it, like, an indention in his scalp. Wawa wipes the blood off his face; Butch says, "Hey man, djeet" Wawa says, "Na, ain't et yet, what ya got; soft pretzel?"

Butch hands Wawa a pretzel out the bag. They walk under the El, across the railroad tracks, down to the river. Sitting on the bank, they eat the rest of the pretzels. Wawa likes soft pretzels, they're nice and salty; they're going to be friends forever. Wawa gets to keep his quarter.

Butch and Wawa Get Pinched

Butch and Wawa friends downtown looking nighttime windows. Fat Butch, skinny Wawa wanted that radio, more than anything the moment, thought they better have it. Never having anything nice, they had a rock to throw, they did.

Butch grabs the box, they run round the corner, found a tomato car with two bulls sitting it, oops. Bulls chase them down the street; catch slow Butch the goods, fast Wawa gets away, runs through alleys home to Lucy.

They take Butch down the station, sit him with friendly cop who gives him a soda, talks in nice to him, he wants to be Butch's friend, no one's going to hurt him, all he wants is an address and name. Butch doesn't like the looks the other cop, kind of pacing, nervous, slapping his nightstick, looking grouchy, Butch thinks he better dime. Tomato car goes out Wawa's, knocks the door. Lucy greets them, "wadda ya want", they say "your boy". "You're outa yer skull, you don't need my Wawa, he ain't done shit, e's a good Catholic boy, goes Mass every Sunday, he's good at school, studies hard, leave'em alone." "Sorry lady, we're taking him in." Past midnight, Butch and Wawa end up Old Mokey. Two guards take them the shower room; give them a good cleaning. One of the guards, a big brawny blond says "Hey Joe, why don't you get Butch grayed, take him down the block. I want to have a few words with Wawa." Joe smiles, says "OK Bruce, see you later." Bruce looks at Wawa, motions him to come out the shower. Still wet, Wawa walks over; Bruce grabs his arm, rips the church metal off his neck. "Hey mister, what you doin my metal, gimmie back my metal, I need it." Bruce turns him around, shoves him in a corner, grabs his arms, binds Wawa's hands behind his back with the metal's chain.

"Wadda you doin mister, wadda you doin me, hey, don do that." Bruce holds Wawa's wrists with one hand, grabs a wet bar of soap with the other, bends Wawa over in the corner. lubricates Wawa's rectum with the soft soap. "Mister, mister, don't do that, that ain't right, that hurts." Bruce penetrates Wawa; Wawa's screaming now, "Please mister, please stop, please, please, it hurts too much, please stop." Bruce is done with him, throws him on the floor, says, "See Wawa, that's what happens when you break the Lord's commandments, steal stuff, you get broke into."

Bruce walks Wawa down the cellblock, inmates in their cells laugh and snicker, "Looks like Bruce got his self another chicken, hey chicken, what you bawlin bout."

Bruce shoves Wawa into a cell with Butch. Wawa runs to Butch sobbing while Butch's eyes get big, Wawa hugs him, Butch says "Wha?" Wawa throws himself on his cot and cries about Bruce hurting him, hurting him bad. Butch holds him, says he'll take care of him, asks what happened. "I don't know, something bad happened, I wanna go home." In a couple of days, Wawa writes a letter to Lucy. "Mom, Butch and I are doing fine. I miss you an awful lot, please don't worry. I don't know when we will get out of here, but it's OK, they treat us good and there's plenty to eat, I miss you an awful lot. I don't know when we'll go before the judge, but I hope it's soon."

Lucy reads his letter Butch's mom, say's her Wawa's all right, he's not a bad kid, how could a bad kid write a nice letters like that.

Every few days,

Bruce takes Wawa up for another shower; has to look after the kid's personal hygiene, they're not very clean from that hood, so you have to help them.

Butch and Wawa Do Naughty[ii]

Friday night finds Butch and Wawa sitting the stoop New Market Street. Big hair Betty struts by looking good, Wawa hollers "Yo sharp Betty you wanna go do some soup". Betty says, "No I've gotta go do work, catch the el to K & A, dance the club".

She doesn't like the company's he keeping either, big old Butchie just sitting there strange; looking fat and ugly in his dirty undershirt with a big hole his belly button showing through.

Wawa's a skinny kid with a "four in one" hanging from a chain round his neck. He's smart and quiet, could be pious; anywhere else he'd be better cared for, sit in some fancy private school turning academic tricks.

He's just got out "Old Mokey", where he spent the last six months waiting trial for breaking a window, stealing a portable radio; got out time served; it was hell. The keepers started out chatting him up, then invited him to join their dance card. What a deal, not for Wawa, no money in it, nothing gained.



Butchie Wawa's boss says, "Yo Wawa, time we went get paid". They walk down Popular to Front then Allen down Columbia to Penn Treaty Park.

In Penn Treaty Park, stands the Charter Elm, where William Penn did his treaty with the natives, started Pennsylvania's holy experiment in this fair green country town just a few centuries back in 1682. The pier juts out the river beside the power station.

There floats a big yacht with all kinds of fancy polished brass. A guy dressed to kill with a white captain's hat, navy blue blazer, looking like he didn't belong this hood, an obvious jack from nicer places. Butch and Wawa look at the jack, marking him. He looks interested in Wawa. Jack invites the lads on his yacht for a little brewskie and suds.

Jack's got a fine collection of Playboy mags, shows some good blue flicks, pretty girls doing weird stuff entertaining Butch and Wawa who sit quaffing suds from jack's keg, using real honest to goodness mugs, not cans. Jack's plays the perfect host, making the lads feel at home; hey, like consider this your home, do you want to use the John and other friendly chatter. He serves them some fries and burgers on fine porcelain plates with silver forks and spoons.

Towards midnight jack turns to serious business, asks Butch how much he needs for the boy. Butch says, "Gimmey twenty and he's all yours". Jack says "OK son, lets go" and grabs Wawa by the shoulders. Wawa screams "You filthy jack" and knees him in the nuts. Jack folds up and Butchie grabs his ankles, pushes him to the floor. Wawa smashes jack's head with a chair, starts to choke him and bash his head against the boards again and again. Wawa starts to cry, bangs jack's head harder and harder, screaming "You filthy jack, you filthy jack". Butchie pulls him off, tells Wawa not to kill him; lets take his stash and leave. Wawa laughs and says, "I know, I know; get his wallet, get me out of here".

[ii] "Philadelphia River Rat Words", Published 2001

Butch and Wawa Do Hope Street[iii]

Wawa had Butch a little concerned, choking the dude their last pier jack-roll; just that kind of stuff could get them burned. Wawa was even getting mean with Butch he was making the hood a little itchy. Butch decides to take him down Hope Street, get him laid by one of those immigrant girls, holed up at Madam Queen's.

Hope Street's a little street, too narrow for a garbage truck. Rats don't even run for cover, they feel that much at home. Rough cobbles old as the city glisten in the misting rain. A single streetlight illuminates the door of Madam Queen's.

Madam Queen grabs Wawa, gives him a great big hug, says, "Hey Wawa you handsome kid, where you been so long?"

She loves Wawa, remembers him from a kid, when he used to come in looking for a quiet place to do his homework. He studied in the kitchen. "Anna; you take care of Butchie, make sure he don't run away, take him to the cellar" Anna, she's the plumber, she owns the cellar, does the dirty work, and knows what Butchie wants.

She strips him naked, fits his ample girth with a western saddle, and pulls out her riding crop. "You go boy, move your ass," SLAP, "Take me on to Goonsbury Fair," SLAP, SLAPPTY SLAP. "I can't go, I can't go, you'll have to hit me harder;" SLAP, SLAPPTY SLAP.

"You come with me young Wawa, I've got you a new one up stairs, I want you to help break her in." In room eight sits new one Marya Young Blond, trim body, pert tits and hardly a mark on her. Wawa eyes cold as ice, voice a monotone; "Lets do a hang and spin."

"Butchie, you stop that farting or I'm going to cork you." SLAP, SLAPPTY SLAP "Oh no, not the cork, reach in me, reach in me instead, that'll make me stop."

Marya Young Blond shackled wrists to ankles, suspends from the ceiling swivel. Wawa grabs her by the hair,



pulls her head back; kisses her on the lips. Rubs his hands all over her body, likes what he sees and feels. Wawa says, "OK lets go."

"Butchie; your bitch of an old lady feeds your ass too much, you're useless as a pony." She digs into his thighs with her spurs, but it does no good, no movement, just a bunch of grunts and moans.

Wawa lies on the table, his erection high and hard; he gives a little nod. Madam Queen lowers Marya just so, full penetration up to the balls. Madam Queen slaps her hard, makes her spin, Marya lets out a piteous howl, while Wawa says "Again", another slap, another howl, "Again", another slap, another howl from the depths of her misery.

Anna takes off the saddle, puts shackles on Butch's wrist and ankles, pulls him taut out on the rack; his enormous stomach an expanse of pasty white quivering flesh. "Lets see how you handle some hot wax you fat piece of dog excrement." She lights a candle and drips hot wax on his crotch. He just lies there screaming. "Yes, yes, more wax, bigger candle."

Wawa's done and satisfied; Marya Young Blond is still in chains. Wawa pulls her hair, kisses her on the lips again, licks the tears from her eye sockets, spits in her face and calls her a little DP whore.

Madam Queen wants to know, "Wawa, what makes you so mean when Butchie's such a gentleman?"

[iii] "Philadelphia River Rat Words", Published 2001

Butch and Wawa Do the Shore

Wawa spots Big Hair Betty strutting down New Market Street, says, "Hey Betty, hows bout you and I do a funnel cone?" Betty hollers back "Not with you loser, I hear you spit on Young Blond Marya. I hear she's looking for an extra or she's telling her brother Walt."

"You best lookout Wawa, you know what that ape Walt's like when he starts on you with his set of tire chains. Hell, he'll rip your face to shreds, tear up your pretty frame like coleslaw, make you look a little raw. Better get yourself about twenty-five and pay that child off."

Lucky Wawa has some jack cash left from the Penn Treaty Park job, he trots on over to talk to Young Blond Marya.

Marya's sitting her stoop, Wawa sits down, says he's sorry for spitting her face, asks if she could use twenty-five big ones. She say, "Yeah, that's cool, how you doing?" Wawa asks if he can borrow Walt's tire chains, no use taking chances. Wawa thinks she's the most beautiful girl he's ever seen; now she has some clothes on. Big Hair Betty sees Butch sitting the park, says hi. Madame Queen's told her Butch is a gentleman and nice. Butch is sporting a new sweatshirt, one without a hole. Butch tells her she looks good, and of course, she does. Betty asks him walk her over the El, he says OK. They make plans go the shore Saturday; Butch can get his old man's car, no trouble.

Butch, Wawa, Marya and Betty meet the morning; Wawa puts Walt's chains the trunk, just in case, you know, you can never be too careful. They cross the Ben Franklin, take the White Horse Pike to AC. Butch is driving along with Betty's head on his lap; she's throwing empty soda cans out the window, they're having a good time.

Wawa has Marya in the back seat; they're getting it together in a relaxed sort of way. Everything's cool.

They spend the day the ocean, splashing the water, trying to swim, getting nice Jersey Shore tans. The girls are busy slathering themselves with lotion; don't want to risk sunburn.

Towards night they're getting hungry, they need a payday, decide to have a little fun with the fancy folks. Wawa pulls the tire chains out the trunk, they link the chains around Marya's and Betty's neck, parade the girls bikini clad frames down the boardwalk. Pretty soon two young preppy types ask to rent the girls; "Hey, how much you guys want for these two gorgeous chicks?" Butch sizes them up, decides they have some money, says "Fifty bucks each, pay us now." While Butch takes the preppie's money, Wawa, quick like a bunny unhooks the chains from around the girls necks, lets them free. He tosses one of the chains to Butch while the girls run off down the boardwalk towards Kentucky Ave. where they have the car parked. Butch and Wawa start swinging the chains over their heads, threatening the preppies, swinging at them. They chase the preppies off, run like hell towards the car. speed on out-a AC. Heading back home, they decide they really should try this again sometime. Had a nice time, the trip paid for itself and more.



Butch and Wawa Do Marriage

Big Hair Betty beat Butch down, cleaned up his language, his appearance. They'd sit Beth Eden's stoop, talk into the morning with Wawa and Marya.

Butch spent his nights now at Betty's place, sleeping a couch when her old lady was home, slipping into bed with Betty when she wasn't. Butch's dad and Betty's old lady decided the kids should marry, it's a Catholic hood you know, and people do talk. Butch and Betty thought that was cool.

Marya's old man threw her out; she stayed with Wawa and Lucy. Lucy loved the little child, thought she would be OK with her Wawa. Wawa looked after her; he was working down the docks, showed up each morning for shape-up. Marya didn't go to Madame Queen any more. Lucy liked what she saw, shooed them off to Father Stan down Mother of Divine Grace for instructions.



Betty soothed Butch's fears and ghosts; he lost weight, bought a shirt and tie to visit Father Stan. Butch's dad got him a job the docks with Wawa, Butch was big, could take care of business, looked after skinny Wawa, made sure he made out OK.

To save some money, they planned their wedding for the same day. Nothing big, they weren't rich, but nice with lots of friends, loads of relatives, all just poured into Mother of Divine Grace, filled the church up pretty well.

In years to come, Father Stan christened lots of their children, lots of Roberts, Joans, Williams and Marys. They never moved, always stuck to the hood, and their children grew up just like they did, and stayed.

Butch and Wawa Do Bruce

Butch and Wawa lounging down the pier with their boys late a hot, sticky summer night, watching them dive and swim the river. They're sitting there smoking their stogies, relaxing after a hard day the docks. Nobody else sitting on the pier, they notice a guy with a boat; he's watching the boys dive and swim. It's someone they think they know; he's out there trying to get the boys attention.

Wawa's son Bill clumbers up on the pier, ready to take another dive. Wawa tells Bill to swim out there, ask the guy if his name's Bruce. Tells Bill to have the guy pull the boat close the pier so he can pick up Butch's son Bob if he answers yes. Being an obedient boy, Bill does as he is told, gets in the boat with Bruce. Bruce is happy to have him aboard, he steers the boat over to the pier so he can pick up Bob too.

Soon as the boat is near enough, Wawa jumps in the boat, asks Bruce if he remembers Wawa from Old Mokey? Bruce says he doesn't remember any Wawa,

never seen him before in his life. A Wawa nod to Butch, who also jumps the boat, hits Bruce across the side of the head hard with his blackjack. Bob, Butch's boy and Bill want to know what's going on, Wawa tells them not to ask questions, they didn't see anything, go on home, it's getting late. Butch tells them not to say anything to their old ladies either, or he'll give them a taste of this, waving the blackjack in their direction. The boys say, yes sir, anything you say sir, climb up on the pier as fast as they can, run up Richmond Street to home. Butch and Wawa know the boys can be trusted to keep their traps shut.

Wawa gives Butch the keys to his car, tells him to bring it down the pier, he wants to spend some time with Bruce alone.

Wrapping his four in one metal's chain around Bruce's neck, Wawa pulls and pulls and pulls for a long time, a long time, until Butch gets back with the car. Butch eases Wawa's hands away from the chain, Wawa says he's been waiting a long time to do that, about fifteen years.

Butch and Wawa lift Bruce up on the pier, out to the car, put him in the trunk. They drive up the river to pier fifty-eight, where a shipment of computers is waiting to be loaded on to a ship bound for Brazil. They take all Bruce's clothes off, stuff him in the wooden container. They'll load him on the ship tomorrow. Butch and Wawa drive back to the pier, all the while Wawa's laughing, "He won't bother no kids nomore, ha ha ha ha, he won't do that to anyone again, ha ha ha ha, can you believe it, he didn't even remember me, ha ha ha ha. he musta done that a thousand times in the last fifteen years, ha ha ha ha, he won't bother our kids in the water again, ha ha ha ha, I got his ass, I got his ass, ha ha ha ha ha."

They go back to Bruce's boat, throw his clothes in the boat, siphon out the gas in the tank, throw it all over the boat, making sure to soak Bruce's clothes. Wawa starts the engine slow, jumps out the boat onto the pier; Butch throws a book of matches into the boat setting it afire.

Butch and Wawa go home, wake up their sons; tell them what Bruce did to Wawa. The boys promise not to breath a word. They can be trusted; brought up not to be squealers and rats.

Butch and Wawa Just Sit

Next-door neighbors, Butch and Wawa sit out front. Skinny old Wawa sits in a red, white and blue foldable lawn chair, while Butch, who has better padding, sits his stoop.

It's a ninety-degree late afternoon, they're watching the basketball tournament across the street in the playground. The crowd's noisy and rambunctious, Mother of Divine Grace, who sponsors the games, is selling hotdogs and popcorn while a steady stream of youngsters goes in and out of the Neighborhood Scoop buying ice cream, cheesed up soft pretzels, Popsicles and Italian Water Ice. The Good Humor Truck is playing its tune, drawing parents who'd rather buy their little ones cold treats outdoors. It's going to be busy and loud tonight, till two in the morning, cause there's no sleeping allowed in the red brick ovens of this rowhouse hood. Butch hasn't been out too much since his Big Hair Betty passed away, couldn't stand to be near people. He just sat in the house alone, eating only when Bob's wife stopped by every night to check on him and cook.



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However, he snapped out of that eventually, took up his old stand out the street with Wawa.

They wave their big hard work worn hands to friends and neighbors; wave hands showing forty years of hard labor down the docks. Work that often lasted from dawn till dusk, work that verified they were men, doing the kind of work for which God designed them. Wawa has two skinny fingers missing; Butch has one fat finger gone.

Now they're just old men, sitting out the night, giving advice as best they can to younger men that stop by to learn special things that you need to know in the hood, that's Ok. Butch does most of the talking now, Wawa's somewhat forgetful, doesn't remember a lot of things, that's Ok. They talk about their time in the Army, but only the good part, the fun things; that's Ok. They talk about work, about all their mates, most of whom have already died, that's Ok.

About midnight the lovely Marya, who is still small, thin, dyed blond and beautiful after all these years gets back from Bingo over Mother of Divine Grace. She calls them in for ice cream and the nights final cup of coffee, that's Ok.

Yeah, that's Ok.



Marya and Wawa Do Death

And so, it ends, after sixty years. Wawa lays a bed a sick old man, wasted toothless wreck, he wants to go home.

Marya holds his hand, says "No Wawa no, you stay here, it's better here, you'll feel better, then you can come home."

"Marya, let me come home; I'm sorry, I'll never do it again; I'll be good, and I'll never hurt you again."

"No, no Wawa; I know, I know; you'll do better here; you'll get well, I know, I know; then I'll take you home."

"Oh Marya, Marya, it hurts here; please, please, I'll be good; don't let them hurt me anymore."

"Oh Wawa, Oh Wawa, I'm right here; I'll hold your hand; It's Ok, It'll be Ok."



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