

Fused by the Arm

By: Jericho Ashby

I had a dream one frosty night. It has kept me up tossing and turning past nights and again, this night have I dreamt it. The world around grows dark and after a moment a light appears and a fog lifts and I see, sitting on a blue stool, a boy. He is awaiting the moment that will shape his life. Everything in the room is measured for perfection and purpose. There was a gray table and a gray light and gray walls. His bright green eyes wandered. For a long time he sat in the room focused. Listening. Wondering if something should fall. A pin should drop. He waited for a disturbance, for a resulting sound to echo, echo, echo in the stale air. The expected came disappointingly. Nothing but silence. Then the two men in uniform came, like they always came for those that reached the age of twelve.

A thrilling sense would have entered him if the circumstances were different but this was his day of Fusion and seeing the outside did not thrill him enough to overcome the sense of expectation and duty that fell upon him. His eyes were locked to the back of the charcoal uniform in front of him. The men were silent and serious and each step the three moved seemed rehearsed or expected. None hesitated. None flinched or looked about. Their eyes were forward in their mission. They entered a car that transported them to a large white building which they entered and came into a large hollow room with only a surgery table and some surgeon tools. Across the room another boy entered. His gaze was pensive and his hair combed back. His height was matched perfectly to the other boys. "Unwin, this is Durell. Durell this is Unwin." The boys met in the middle. The other boy that was evidently Unwin, combed back his hair some more

before meeting Durell's outstretched hand for a shake. He followed with a nod after Durell said hello.

Measurements were taken of the two boys from head to toe and shoulder to foot and hip to ankle. "Everything matches up as it did before." announced a man in a lab coat assisting in the task. "We may proceed with the operation. All extra procedures were taken before hand so we can get right to it." The boys approached the operation table and disrobed then climbed on the table and laid side to side. "Time to start the Fusion" pronounced the same man in the lab coat. The room became dim and foggy and I did not see what happened in that interval of time but I must say I was shocked to see what transformation that was made on these two boys.

His parents had explained to him from an early age the importance of fusion. Their fused arm rested on the dining room table as they went in more depth about the process. Durell gazed at that arm. The father's skin was much darker than his birth mothers. The tones mixed and faded between the light and dark on that arm as if it were a battle amongst the cells. Some tones were strong and others meshed with defeat. They had both gone through the process twice, once at the age of twelve and again at the age of twenty, when they were fused together. They talked of the progress made due to the fusion of their previous partners and they talked of the tests, responsibilities, the growth pills(used to keep your height even with your partner), rewards, and the honor of having a partner. He looked into their dull eyes and stone faces then back at the battle on the fused arm. The makings of a good partner is someone who instructs the other on how to become more advanced. They were the person you told everything and the person that new everything about you. They were in charge of extinguishing all

emotions that interfere with advancement, which was every emotion because emotions are deemed as useless things. Unwin and Durell's arms were bound from the elbow to the wrist.

Years passed by. Unwin was always at work fixing Durell's defaults. He constantly made remarks and suggestions. He criticized when he used words that were too subjective or emotionally related. He disapproved of any kind of voice inflection. Durell's did his best to keep Unwin in check as well, but he could not get on the level at which Unwin resided. He could not get at the level he saw his mother and father at. He could not get at the level the society shared. He became quieter. Only sounds and syllables came from his mouth that held no meaning to him, and therefore lost their worth. They were no longer words to him. He lost sight in meaning. The suppression led to a deep resonating sadness. I continued to watch his struggle feeling the pain that dug into him. Every night his secrets spilled over his journal, which he kept between the floorboards. He could breathe but he could not live.

He couldn't take it anymore. At the age of 20 he ran away. He and Unwin were split in order for his new partner to infuse. Before the second operation he ran and no one ever saw him again even though the hound went loose and search parties searched. He spent a couple of years in the wilderness longing for someone to speak to and connect with but for the rest of his life he was just as alone as he was those eight years attached to the arm of another. After those two years alone he died of illness.

Horrified I awoke with sweat dampening my forehead. I saw the truth. I looked at the past and I looked at the now. I looked at the shallow friendships, the alliances built by advantage. I saw my past in its clear and painful reality. I saw the victims fused to

my arm and made a realization. Friends are not meant to be glued to the arm, to drag and pull at, to correct and criticize and mould into your own liking. They are meant to be tied to the hand to listen to and assist in gentle guidance when needed. Loved ones are not to be fused to the arm at the elbow in order to yank. They are to be connected at the rib, the cage of the heart where both are fully exposed to only one another in all emotion and feeling, beating together against the world.