

Homophobia is a serious issue in small towns, such as Milaca (population 2750), Minnesota. I know from personal experience. Luckily, I was able to leave the high school when I was accepted to Perpich Center For Arts Education for Literary Arts in Spring 2007.

The last day of school at Milaca High. It was a day that I'd like to forget. I was tormented there. My mom had to come in on numerous occasions because the teasing would get so severe. I was treated badly. I was the gay guy that no one liked.

It was the last day of 8th grade and I was so happy that it was about to be over with. I was so glad that I was finally going to be released of the prison that I was forced to live within during five days of the week. So on my last day, I really wanted it to go smoothly, but it didn't. First a bunch of boys spit on me in Social Studies and threw multiple water balloons at me in the hallway. I tried to ignore it, but I was wet. After that I got slammed into a few lockers. Soon after I was pushed down the stairs.

At lunch I sat by myself, waiting for some of my friends. A guy sitting at the table next to me began throwing food at me. I told him to knock it off. He said, "What are you going to do about it, queer?" His friend got up and started harassing me, saying that he was going to kick my ass. He wouldn't leave me alone. Another boy, a nice jock who I thought was once my friend was sitting with him, smiling viciously at me. He made me feel like I was nothing. I went to the Agriculture classroom where my next class would be, but the door was locked. I stepped into the bathroom and went into the stall. Suddenly, I never felt more alone in my entire life. I hit the stall, with my fist, trying to take out all this frustration, anger, and sadness. I thought about all the times that those boys had hurt me, like on Halloween. They had gotten together and started sending sexual notes to other boys saying that they were from me. I remembered sitting in the counselor's office that day, reporting the incident. After that I broke down in Chemistry. I said, "I just want to kill myself," out loud. The teacher pulled me out of class and consoled me, and sent me back to the counselor's office, but still nothing was done about the incident. I also remembered walking around that Halloween with my friends, and being called a "faggot" by people everywhere I turned.

I returned to Agriculture class after lunch and that "nice jock" who I thought was once my friend was with some other boys, and now they were laughing at me. My eyes were probably swollen from all the crying.

Just when I thought that it couldn't get any worse and that when the bad part of the day had finally ended, more happened. Around 6th period I walked by myself in the hallway and passed another group of boys. One of them chucked a bowl of yogurt, splattering it all over me. I was drenched in it and they all laughed. I kept walking like I didn't notice a thing. When I got to choir, covered in yogurt, I began to shake and that's when I completely lost it. I cried and cried. A friend of mine comforted me. She brought me to the office and this time I talked to the principal.

I went to the bathroom and cried some more, cleaning myself off. That was such a low point in my life. I looked at my reflection in the mirror. What I saw I hated. I hated myself. I hated the fact that I was gay. I wanted my life to end. Why were they doing this to me? I just wanted to scream, "WHY? WHY? WHY? WHAT DID I EVER DO TO YOU?" out loud, but I remained silent.

I remember walking home, all alone, in the rain. It was pouring pretty hard. A nice old couple picked me up on the side of the road. That was so sweet of them.

Through out the past few years I've learned and dealt with a lot. My skin has grown thick to the insults. I've learned to keep my head up and stay positive. I've learned to become more comfortable with who I am. I've seen the bright side of things and even though each day is a struggle, I always smile. And I appreciate what I've got but oh god, it gets so hard to go on sometimes – But still, with all of the love I have inside of me I can stand as tall as the tallest tree. I'm thankful for both the easy and hard days that I'm living, and most of all I'm so thankful for loving who I really am and being able to say that I'm beautiful... I'm beautiful, and I'm okay... It's been so hard for me to say that, but I can now. I know who I am and no one is ever going to make me feel ashamed of that.

It absolutely breaks my heart that other kids that have come out or suspected of being gay are dealing with the cruelty of homophobia. It is an issue that needs to be brought more awareness in high schools.