

Tactics

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A hedgerow runs the length of our garden.
On the other side is the primary school's grass pitch.
Mum thinks the hedge isn't tall enough. Dad says
one of these days he'll build a wall in its place.

Some evenings, big boys from the village play football
on the pitch. I watch through gaps in the hedge.
One team always takes their tops off, even when it's raining.
They shout a lot and thud into each other like dodgems.

When it gets dark they smoke cigarettes and get so loud
I can hear them from inside. Sometimes there are sounds
like bottles smashing. Today, I see my dad through a gap.
He is talking to the boys. One of them walks towards him.

Mum whisks me away from the hedge.
When Dad comes in I'm bristling with questions.
He says they were just discussing tactics.
I ask him what tactics are. I ask him what a *fucker* is.