

Andrew Malan Milward
Author of “Derby Day”

Brief commentary on my story “Derby Day” in *Notre Dame Review*:

Like every writer, during the first six months of the pandemic I took a vow, pledging not to write a Covid story, and then promptly broke that vow. I played basketball growing up and into college and continue to be obsessed with the game and sports in general. One of the interesting things about the first scary months of the pandemic was experiencing what it felt like to live in a world that was essentially devoid of sports. About the only sport that was able to continue—at least in some states—was horseracing, with which I quickly became obsessed. Given that I live in Lexington, Kentucky, this was especially easy to do. Though I’m not much for gambling myself, I’ve always been interested in people who are, and this story took shape around a character who is so good at it that he’s able to make a comfortable living as a sports bettor. Of course, when Covid hits, his livelihood is put in jeopardy because sports—like everything—has shut down. His attempt to stay afloat financially becomes entirely dependent on horse gambling, driving the story toward its climax. The macro-level travails of our global society crumbling in Covid times are mirrored by the micro-level implosion of his domestic life. I felt a little sheepish when I caved and wrote a story about Covid, but in retrospect I’m glad I did. Not only did it help me endure the terrifying, is-society-collapsing uncertainty of that weird and sad time but it also helped me try to make a little sense of it. Sports felt like an interesting—if on the surface trivial-seeming—angle from which to approach the pandemic.

Links to more work by Andrew Malan Milward:

Oxford American: <https://oxfordamerican.org/magazine/issue-114-fall-2021/apple-flesh>

Virginia Quarterly Review: <https://www.vqronline.org/fiction/2015/04/i-was-revolutionary>

Guernica: <https://www.guernicamag.com/the-americanist/>