

When We Were Young

Fifty years ago in an all-boys Catholic school on Price Hill,
The world was smaller, but our dreams were big,
And all things seemed possible;
When we were young,

Everything was big.
There was the “Big Klu,”
And the “Big O.”
And, of course, the “Big Boy.”

Cars were huge, heavy, and made of real metal,
But gas was cheap.
Five gallons for a buck,
And you were good for the week.

Then--someone pumped our gas,
Cleaned our windshield,
And checked our oil & tires.
That was considered “normal service.”

There were no Bengals;
And the Reds played at Crosley Field.
We rooted for the Royals,
And soccer was still a mystery sport.

We had no Social Media,
But we made life-long friends.
We had no iPod,
But we had our 45s and 78s.

We had no X-Box,
But we played sports.
And there was no designated hitter;
---Everyone was supposed to be a hitter.

Many things have happened since that spring of 61:
Vietnam, the Moon landing, Microwave Ovens,
The Big Red Machine, 9/11, the Iraq, Afghanistan and now Libyan wars,
Blu-Ray, the Internet, Flatscreen TVs, and of course,
We can't forget Google, Facebook, and Twitter.

Vietnam was the defining period for our generation,
And we all served our country honorably.
We may have been in Cincinnati, or we may have been in Vietnam,
But we all supported the troops.
We should always be proud of that.

However, even as times have changed,
Many things have remained the same.
Friday night football, the Elder spirit and sports dominance,
Seton just across the street, The Reds, Fountain Square, Findlay Market, and Hudepohl Beer.

And the most important things that have remained the same,
White Castles, Three-Ways, and LaRosa's Pizza.
Of course, now I am forced to buy my White Castle's at Wal-Mart,
And my Skyline Chili from Amazon.
And I still haven't found pizza better than LaRosa's.
And, after years of frustration, I have given up trying to explain Cincinnati Chili to "outsiders."

As the years passed,
We all moved on.
To live our dream,
Or to climb either another or a different mountain.

Many remained here in Cincinnati,
Others followed their rainbow elsewhere.
Wherever we were, whatever we did,
Our core values were formed right here at Elder.

Many of our classmates are not here with us tonight,
In fact, 47 have left us, but they are not forgotten.
Mike Hust, Dan Franklin, Artie Weigand, Jimmy Finley, and so many more.
Somehow, I sense that their spirit is here tonight,
And from another place, they are celebrating with us.

When I look back at my Elder days,
I only have fond memories
Of what Elder provided me, and
How it profoundly affected my life.

My experiences at Elder have kept me grounded,
And provided me with a steady hand through the tough times.
At the time, the obstacles seemed difficult to overcome...if not impossible.
But the lessons learned right here at Elder, got me through all of them.

Elder gave me an education that was second to none, but Elder went beyond academics.
I learned about winning, losing, teamwork, hard work, perseverance, and determination.
While, at the same time, Elder provided me the spark,
Which ignited my desire to become a life-long learner, teacher, and mentor.

For you see, Elder was more than a school;
And although it didn't seem so at the time, it provided us a roadmap for life.
Whether on the sports field, in class, or even in the Jug.
Elder was always teaching us, and it all mattered.

Of all the memories carved into my 68 year-old mind and body,
The one memory that is the most vivid of all;
Is when I think back *when we were young*,
And proud members of that special Class of 61.