Shit Happens to Pretty Girls

Ella Jones, 2025

This summer, I embarked on a project to write a novel that explores a woman’s perspective on

her college’s football team, both on and off the field. This idea was inspired by my experience

working for the Bowdoin Football Team, where I am privy to the inner workings of the team due

to my role as an assistant athletic trainer.

An avenue of research that I found to be especially fruitful was conversation. I spent late hours

prodding the minds of the football players, slowly coloring a greater understanding of what it

meant to play the sport. In the beginning, we discussed the more accessible topics: workout

schedules, eating, other teams in the conference. And later, we progressed further into the psyche

of the football player: mentality, team dynamics, coaches. It was illuminating to understand the

more bleak aspects to football from an inside perspective, but I was most surprised by how,

despite the constant pressure and stress they are under, the players feel such vehement love for

their team and their sport.

I also had conversations with girls around campus who had intimate connections with the

football team. These ranged from long-term relationships, short-term relationships, and

friendships. For example, I talked with a girl who had been raped by a football player and

reported him to Title IX. I talked with a girl who had been in an abusive relationship with a

football player. I talked with a girl who would trust the football team wholeheartedly, and I

talked with many girls who had fallen in love with football players.

This novel is a reconciliation of a myriad of perspectives on football players. Using what I know

from my personal experience as well as those I have talked to, I have constructed a fictional

world that challenges the narrator as she must navigate her entanglement with the football team

as well as complex social dynamics involving the players.

Over the course of the next year, I will continue to write, further exploring football as a sport,

concept, and obsession as I sign onto my third season with the Bowdoin Football Team. I hope to

write a novel that is capable of transforming perspectives, healing the past, and generating

empathy and understanding.

I loved the opportunity to immerse myself in the world I was creating. As I could fully commit to

writing this summer, I felt that I was able to tap into my