

## Band Geek

It was just before the Edward S. Puckett marching band were to take the field, they stood lined on the sidelines, horns cocked at attention, their brass bells blinding under the white light of the stadium. The trumpet heavy and billowing sound of their fight song had left them breathless and goose pimpled. Their hearts beating hard as slender trickles of perspiration cascaded down the soft ridges of their foreheads, their normally gloomy and taciturn faces uplifted. The vivid scarlet constellations of acne on their cheeks and chins subdued under a rosy facial flush. It was a sound that many of the band members thought, as their eyes teared with pride, was as close to perfect as anything they had ever heard. Though they had heard very little of the classical marching band music rehearsed in the summer, of Mahler and Sousa. Instead spending most of their nights with their heads sandwiched between black foamy head phones playing air guitar in their dark stormy rooms. They still marveled though at that flowering sound, the sumptuous shades of wind and brass as it floated up into the hazy skies, bouncing off rickets and sheer aluminum seats, and the rankled chain link fences, hobbled and wilting.

It was their first half time show of the season and there was an eagerness and audacity that transcended the band members past humiliations and failures. Easing recent doubts and worries. It showed in the freshness of their pivots as they filed out of the bleachers and on to the sidelines. It showed in the spirited cadences by the snares and the bass drums. It showed in the precision of their straight regimented lines. . It didn't matter that their team was losing 42-0. Or that the same Football team that stood next to them menacing and morose on the sidelines had spent the previous year flushing their heads in toilets, hiding their gym clothes and releasing air from their bicycle tires. Or even that the heat and humidity of the fall had brought on a buzz of stinging mosquitoes that continued to fly in and around their ears, eyes and noses. All that mattered was the full crowd in attendance, and them, looking polished in their bright and smart looking new uniforms, solid red with thin gold trim along their sleeves and collars. Their bright white sashes glowing hypnotically underneath the stadiums floodlights.