

POETRY



Casey at the Bat (Revised)

By BILL HASTINGS

There were carefree hearts in Mudville, for fifteen years or more. Their champs sent all opponents home; beaten, tired and sore. But Casey was getting older now and the fans began to wonder. How much longer could he last before his bat would blunder. All slugging records were his alone, and no one else was near him. But now his swing was slowing down and his once keen eyes were dim. He batted a mere two twenty-sevens, with only five home runs. And it was no secret in Mudville, Mighty Casey no longer could run. He tried so hard to do his best and through it all persevered. But even his smile could no longer hide he was getting on in years. One more game he waited to play so that his heart could rest. And now his chance was coming up, to prove who was the best. Once he had lost to a pitcher, but later had won, they say. But even Steven is not the game; the world meet again this day. The crowd pored in, twenty thousand or more, to see the last showdown: To pull for Casey once again, but his name could not be found. Well the team fell behind early, in the first inning and a half. And when the seventh inning stretch arrived, there was no hope in sight. And Mudville felt like drowning in their slowly sinking raft. And the crowd began to wonder, "Why wasn't Casey in the fight?" The announcer made no mention that Casey was to bat. And came the ninth, the pitcher smiled, contented as a cat. Two to one was the ugly end approached. And it began to look like the Mudville Manager would soon become a coach. Some part-time fans got up and left, but most remained to cry. "Why isn't Casey here?" a fan moaned. "Someone, tell me why." But hope, it springs eternal, and when Jackson hit a single. The crowd became so quiet, that you could hear a snapping pringle. But then Ross popped out to second and Catfish swung three times. The crowd was terribly tense till Tucker singled down the line. The cries and cheers quickly died as the pitcher was seen on deck. Without a single hit all year, all hope dwindled to a speck. Then from the dugout there came a sign, and the crowd began to roar. The ill-fated batter stepped aside and Casey took a bow. He rubbed his hands into the dirt and wiped them on his pants. Then he strode up to the plate and someone cried, "Casey's back!" The pitcher fired and Casey's bat slowly dropped from his shoulder. "Strike two!" the umpire cried, and Casey again felt older. Casey seemed much younger as he strode up to the plate. The pitcher swung, Casey swung, the umpire called, "Strike one!" And suddenly Casey's confidence seemed to leave with the fleeing sun. The pitcher fired and Casey's bat slowly dropped from his shoulder. "Strike two!" the umpire cried, and Casey again felt older. He felt so tired, his smile was gone, his feet; they weighed a ton. He backed from the plate, his knees they shook, the final moment had come. He doffed his cap and smiled once more, his smile the pitcher returned. He held his breath and stepped back in, his team was very concerned. The pitcher grinned and the final pitch flew, Mighty Casey swung his bat. Up, up and away the sphereoid flew, and even Casey cheered at that. Oh somewhere in this favored land, baseball still is played. By young and old who give their all in the playing of the game. And somewhere crowds still cheer their team to instill a winning fire. But in Mudville, only silent mourning -- Mighty Casey has retired.

NEW BRUNSWICK



Academic roar
is an orchestrated sigh;
sacerdotal rage
is a paralytic twitch;
shackled men,
with all the years of yesterday,
grovel in the dust
and Irving's grasping hands
are everywhere.
Maurice Spiro

SOMETIMES
All goes so well.
Sometimes
Or who you're with.
It doesn't matter
Where you are,
Sometimes
The sun forever shines.
There's no rain to be seen.
Sometimes
All is serene.
Sometimes
with all the years of yesterday,
grovel in the dust
and Irving's grasping hands
are everywhere.
Other days
Other times
All is not so great.
Your toasts burn.
Your bus is late.
Yes, sometimes
You need someone
To help pull you through!
That is why,
Friends,
I am glad I have you
JUST LET ME BE

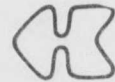
Don't ask of me more than I give
Don't bet on me when you know that I'll lose
Don't do things which I cannot forgive
Don't give me alternatives from which I cannot
choose

Do not try to make of me what I am not
Do not try to prove that I am always right
Do not say of what is cold that it is hot
Do not mistake the day from the night

Don't try to please me each and every day
Don't try to understand each mood
Don't try to interpret all that I say
When the pain is there do not try to soothe

Just let me be what I was meant to be
Don't expect me to change from what I am
If you do not understand all this of me
It's O.K., because I found someone who can

Margaret Comau
February 7, 1978



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