

BROOKLYN AUGUST

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(For Jim Bishop)

In Ebbets Field the crabgrass grows

(where Alston managed)

row on row

as the day's axle turns into twilight

I still see them, with the green smell

of just-mown infield grass heavy

in the darkening end of the day:

picked out by the right-field floods, just

turned on and already assaulted by

battalions of circling moths

and bugs on the night shift;

below, old men and offduty taxi drivers

are drinking big cups of Schlitz in the 75C/ seats,

this Flatbush as real as velvet Harlem streets

where jive packs the juke in the June of '56.

In Ebbets Field the infield's slow

and seats are empty, row on row

Hodges is hulked over first, glove stretched

to touch the throw from Robinson at third,

the batters' boxes float in the ghost-glow
of this sky-filled Friday evening
(Musial homered early, Flatbush is down by 2).
Newcombe trudged to an early shower through
a shower of popcorn and newspaper headlines.
Carl Erskine is in now and chucking hard but
Johnny Podres and Clem Labine are heating
in case he blows up late;
he can, you know, they all can
In Ebbets Field they come and go
and play their innings, blow by blow
time's called in the dimness of the 5th
someone chucked a beer at Sandy Amoros in right
he spears the empty cup without a word
and hands it to a groundkeeper chewing Mail Pouch
while the faceless fans cry down juicy Brooklyn vowels,
a plague on both their houses.
Pee Wee Reese leans on his knees west of second
Campanella gives the sign
with my eyes closed I see it all

smell steamed franks and 8 pm dirt

can see those heavenly shades of evening

they swim with angels above the stadium dish

as Erskine winds and wheels and throws low-inside: