

Tomboy

by Darlene Elias

Take me out to the ballpark,
was all about playing stickball
with the boys on the block,
on the street,
in between passing cars.
It was yelling at those ugly faces,
“Hold my place”
while running back upstairs
to the apartment,
so, I can pee,
then back down again,
across the street,
before my turn, and
the next home run.

It meant the boys yelling,
“Go away, you can’t play.”
“You are a girl!”
But I was whip,
as smart as they come. And said,
“Go tells it to your momma!
If you don’t want me to beat you!”
That usually did it,
until I stole first base,
one more time,
and the brutes accused me
of cheating.
My fist always clenched,
ready to give anyone some
lumps.

The girls always wondered,
why I wanted to play,
with the boys,
instead of jumping rope.
Double Dutch was my thing,
I liked much more beating
the boys at their game, because
I wasn’t supposed to,
Especially wearing white cloth
skippy sneakers instead of
pumas or adidas,
the way I was supposed to.
My long pigtails gave me strength
that was unheard of.

At night I imagined myself like
Pippi Longstocking,
with strong arms,
lifting boys instead of horses,
waving my fist and scaring them
away if they tried to.
The moon was filled with dings,
from the balls I hit up there, with
my big anything is possible stick.
The balls didn’t come back down,
just made the moon wink,
smile, and say, “I got you!”