

Baseball Memory, 1958

by Carlo Morrissey

Baseball was our life
From April till the World Series
Played behind a wall of three-deckers
A foundry's barbed-wire fence marked foul territory
First base, the curb under a streetlight
Second a bump of erupting asphalt
The hot corner a large flat stone
Manhole cover 40 paces east of second was home
Too small to play I was the sewer's sentry
One job, stop the ball from plopping down into the muck
I sat atop a river of waste
Despite bigger kids playing like Mantle and Mays
Sometimes, I drifted to happy faraway places
Eventually during one of those sweet moments a wild throw
Our ball determined to escape another inning of abuse
Raced toward me seeking the freedom of the slime below
Everyone in one voice screamed me to action
On my watch saving the ball was never certain
When I rose to the occasion
Every mouth shut for a moment
Relief felt by all
For this seven-year-old made the play of the day