

Keeping Score
by Janice Lynch Schuster

I am in the second grade when daddy comes
to pick us up for the double header at Memorial Stadium.
He is 25 to my seven. It is spring.
The Orioles are taking on the Senators.
My sister and I do not know
what this means, only that daddy has come to take us
for an afternoon and he is not in school.
He is not studying and we do not have to be quiet.
He gives us each a scorecard and shows us how to fill it out,
but we are more interested in the ball boy who has no hands
and we are children and do not understand
what could've happened to him,
but we are sad and intrigued as he delivers
the bat to each player who swings and hits or misses.
Daddy yells and we complete cards
we will save in our scrapbooks.
The day cannot last long enough—
on the ride home we sleep into summer.
That year, we listen to games on the radio,
and the announcer's voice becomes our father's
telling us who is where and who is not
who's stolen second and who's struck out.
We each own a baseball glove and play
wiffle ball on the playground
of our apartments. We are the girls of Summer,
daddy's team—he officiates and pitches,
we hit the ball into the ground
until mommy calls from the balcony and we run
in for our heroes' dinner of hot dogs and baked beans
and kisses good night which no star ever enjoyed
so much as we did that summer of 1969.