



SHORTS

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www.merlynspen.org
merlyn@merlynspen.org

"Catherine!" my mom says. "Catherine, we're almost to where you want to be let off, dear." Instantly, I awaken and realize I have slept through most of the ride.

"Thanks," I say as I open the car door and race to the gates like a runner stealing home.

*Catherine Howard,
Eighth grade, Tilden Intermediate School,
Rockville, Maryland*

Baseball

We got into the car in a fight, as usual. My father didn't understand WHY we had to leave SO early, just to go to a baseball game. It only takes an hour and a half to get to Memorial Stadium, so why leave three hours before the game? he asked. My mother tried to explain to him that I wanted to get players to autograph my ball, but after about five minutes of explaining she gave up. So the atmosphere in the car was—as usual—not comfortable on this trip to the baseball game, one of my two favorite things in life.

To properly understand just exactly how much such a trip meant to me, you have to know something about me. I want to pitch when I grow up. I have since I was about two and saw "the men on TV throwing balls at the other men." I don't go to games to waste money or to stay up late. I go to watch and enjoy.

To block out my parents, I started to day-dream. I imagined myself driving in downtown Baltimore. Speeding down the hills, only stopping at a light, then speeding on again, until I come to the main Oriole thoroughfare, where cars are jam-packed and not moving an inch. This is when I get out and run across the street. As I reach the parking lot, the delight that started out when I bought the tickets grows enormously, and I almost run into the gates. Grinning at the ticket-taker, I talk to him for a second while he checks my bag. Then I run to a section which, I know from experience, is near the Oriole dugout. I walk through the door and look down on the field all the way to the outfield and beyond to the blank faces of the white row houses of 34th Street. The smell of peanuts, ice cream, nachos, tar, leather, and sweat engulf me as I walk slowly down the stairs. I approach the dugout, and . . .