

# Brooklyn August

(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 off-duty taxi drivers  
are drinking big cups of Schlitz in the \$0.75 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 5<sup>th</sup>  
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: