

& the crowd was suddenly silent
& Muhammad looked like he
didn't want to fight
anymore
& just about then a couple of
grownups got thru &
broke the thing up.

IT'S ONLY A GAME

ah yes, it is truly crazy
to be freezing your balls off
10 o'clock at night
playing softball
the 33rd annual city wide
men's softball league
& a whole lot of the players
look like they've been here
every one of the 33 years
& it's just for fun
you know
nobody will hassle you it's
only a game
but things do get hairy I
mean their bald headed 1st baseman
would block the base line &
the ump would ignore it
till our 50 year old catcher
got pissed & sunk an elbow
deep into baldie's beer gut
as he was rounding first
& by the time he got to second
most of their bench was out
on the field after him &
when the ump tried to calm things
someone on the bench tossed a beer can
his way & called him an asshole
& the ump said he'd forfeit the
goddamn game if we didn't start acting
like mature adults
& with much griping & bitching we
went back to the game
& the final score was 30 something
to 20 something
& the only other excitement came late
when our shortstop kept telling
our left fielder where to play
& what he was doing wrong
& some clown hit this pop fly
that dropped between them

& they stood there staring at each other
& cussing each other & then no shit they
started duking it out
right there in left field
while the ball sat on the grass
& this old guy who could hardly run
circled the bases & the ump just
said fuck it this is ridiculous
& called the game
but it was a lot of fun it
really was & next time we're
going to take it easy I
mean it's only a game
right?

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

it's the same every time they call
& they call every holiday
three of them talking at once
my mother starting it off
how is your wife's weight
she's at that age where you
have to be careful
& would she like some earrings
for Christmas
& then it's which relatives have died
& which relatives have married
& she'll be sending clippings
from the papers
some high school classmates in politics
& my old friend Rick called her
he's designing developments now
making a fortune
sounds very happy
& then it's my grandmother
on the rec room extension
she wants to know when they're
going to put my poetry
on the market
& why don't I write stories
I could write just one book
like Gone With the Wind
or Peyton Place
& I'd be set for life
never have to write again
& no one understands why I write
the things I do
& then it's back to my mother
on the kitchen phone
a martini quiver in her voice