

& 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