



Baseball: a Literary Anthology

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Robert Frost never felt more at home in America than when watching baseball "be it in park or sand lot." Full of heroism and heartbreak, the most beloved of American sports is also the most poetic. Its rhythms are those of the seasons. Its memories are savored, its losses lamented. Baseball's graceful athleticism, formal strategy, and democratic spirit have ensured the devotion of Americans for generations, and writers have been drawn to this sport as to no other.

With *Baseball: A Literary Anthology*, The Library of America presents a vivid panorama of the game that is, in Roger Angell's words, "one of the reasons that summer exists." It offers a lively mix of stories, memoirs, poems, news reports, and insider accounts about all aspects of the great American game, from its pastoral 19th-century beginnings to its apotheosis as the undisputed national pastime.

Here are the major leaguers and the bush leaguers, the umpires and broadcasters, the wives and girlfriends and would-be girlfriends, fans meticulously observant and lovingly, fanatically obsessed. Here too are the teams of storied greatness--the Yankees, the Dodgers, the Red Sox--and the luminaries who made them legendary.

Unforgettable portraits of icons such as Christy Mathewson, Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, and Jackie Robinson are joined by glimpses of lesser-known characters such as the erudite Moe Berg, who could speak a dozen languages "but couldn't hit in any of them."

Poems included in *Baseball: A Literary Anthology* include indispensable works whose phrases have entered the language--Ernest Thayer's "Casey at the Bat" and Franklin P. Adams's "Baseball's Sad Lexicon"--as well as more recent offerings from May Swenson, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Martin Espada. Testimonies from classic oral histories offer insights into the players who helped enshrine the sport in the American imagination. Spot reporting by Heywood Broun and Damon Runyon stands side by side with journalistic profiles that match baseball legends with some of our finest writers: John Updike on Ted Williams, Gay Talese on Joe DiMaggio, Red Smith on Lefty Grove.

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From Reader Review Baseball: a Literary Anthology for online ebook

Ian Mullet says

were it not for this book i'd have a phd, but who can solve differential equations when gay talese's nonfiction narrative of joe dimaggio is sitting there unread?

Erik says

Pretty good collection of baseball writings. Some are excellent (Updike's story of the end of Ted William's career in particular) and some are pretty weak. More good than bad although far too much about the Red Sox.

Ryan says

A lovely buffet of baseball literature - of which I am a Fan (not as certain about actual baseball yet). I have enjoyed learning the verse that everyone skips when they sing Take Me Out to the Ball Game, reading about Ty Cobb's fighting and Hal Chase's first base glory, about the other national game called killing-the-umpire and other baseball literary adventures. Its nice because each section is short and I can skip around depending on my mood.

Jesse says

Amazing anthology of baseball writing, stretching back to the 19th century -- some great oral histories of old-time players, New Yorker profiles, etc.. I maybe should've waited til the long, cold months of the off-season. But I didn't.

Dietrich says

Okay to say I've "read" this is a little misleading. It's an anthology, so I pick it up from time to time. (Thanks, Raph!)

B says

Some of it is very good and some of it is meh.

It feels like movie trailers, though. You want to see more of some but you know you have the best part.

Mike Lindgren says

The Library of America and editor Robert Dawidoff have done an excellent job in collecting the reportage, fiction, memoir, and poetry that make up *Baseball: A Literary Anthology*. Spanning the murky and convoluted origins of the game to the present hyper-commercial supershow, the book essentially is a 700-page love letter on the mystery and beauty of the game. Much of the writing, not surprisingly, captures baseball's urban, postwar apogee as epitomized by the fierce internecine baseball wars carried out in New York between the Giants, Dodgers, and Yankees. To me this writing carries a romantic nostalgia for a harder, tougher, yet somehow more elegant America, full of smoke and alcohol and fedoras and profane, hard-bitten sportswriters. Nowhere is this more keenly evoked than in the book's penultimate piece, Don DeLillo's justly famous "Kafko at the Wall," a dazzling and panoramic account of the famous 1951 playoff between the Dodgers and the Giants at the Polo Grounds. A minor but telling cavil: I find it incomprehensible that nothing from Eliot Asinof's superb *Eight Men Out* -- the definitive account of the "thrown" 1919 World Series -- was included herein.

Al says

This is a wonderful collection of baseball writing covering a wide range of time, and including many of the great names and pieces. No matter how much you have read or know about baseball, you are bound to find something new in this book. I particularly liked some of the things from the early days of major league baseball. Highly recommended for all baseball fans.

Christopher says

This is a fine anthology of baseball writing that stretches across the entire history of baseball, from the end of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century. The first 100-200 pages are a little uneven as some, like the classic "Casey at the Bat," are superb while others are down right horrible, and some are a little ho-hum. But once you get past those, the quality of each piece begins to level off and even improve to elysian heights. By the time you reach the end, exhausted by its 715 pages of poems, essays, and miscellaneous yarns, you're excited about game itself and, once again, completely in love with baseball and all of its idiosyncrasies. The last 100-200 pages have some of the best works from an overall perspective because, by this time, the writers are getting closer to the present and each story gets a little more nostalgic, remembering baseball back in the day when the writer was young and innocent. Whenever a writer taps into that spirit in this story, be ready for a good one. In short, this is a great book for the more right-brained baseball fan to read whether it's the off-season or the in-season.

Robert Lukins says

Essays, news stories, fiction and clippings on 150 years of baseball and its sun-bleached world. Worth it alone for the pieces by Roger Angell, DeLillo's near-perfect 'Kafko at the Wall' and the many, many bits on (my beloved) Red Sox. There's a universe where I'm just reading this anthology on an endless loop and I'm

entirely fine and happy.

One day I'll write my baseball book. One day.

Philip Knoerzer says

Well, they got just about everyone you'd ever want to read in here, except for Tom Boswell--my sister's favorite baseball writer. The pieces by Roger Angell and Stephen King are superb. There seems to be a slight bias towards the Boston Red Sox in this book, but I think it's only because very smart writers live in and around Boston.

Chelsea says

This is the book that introduced me to Roger Angell, for which I will be forever grateful. Literature of Baseball is still one of my favorite pointless liberal arts education classes.

Ron Kaplan says

anthology,essays

Dingerj says

I am currently reading this slowly, essay by essay.
