



2014's

**Greatest
Hits!**

**From the custodians of the only
website for daily baseball poetry**

This collection is taken from the poetry posted on BARDBALL.COM during the 2014 season. Our thanks to all the writers, singers, and videomakers who have contributed to the site.

Every day during the regular season, BARDBALL.COM publishes poetry, songs, and videos from baseball fans across the world. It's a place for them to showcase their creativity and love of the game. Our goal is to document the entire regular season for every team, fusing the art of the game with the art of writing, and resurrecting the ghosts of Ring Lardner, Grantland Rice, and others who included light verse in their daily sports columns.

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Goodbye, Cruel World – It's Opening Day

by Hart Seely

The gods place bets with loaded dice,
And all our earthly dreams betray,
But listen to one clown's advice,
Goodbye, cruel world; it's opening day.

The politicians scrounge for power,
With consequences we shall pay.
But somewhere, it's our finest hour,
Goodbye, cruel world; it's opening day.

Our weary age is full of war,
The daily news brings dark dismay,
So surf the dreams worth living for,
Goodbye, cruel world; it's opening day.

Opening Day 2014

by Doug Fahrendorff

Another season
Harbingers of spring
Robins in my yard
This morning
Brewer baseball
On the radio
This afternoon
Snow predicted
By the weekend
Our equanimity
Undisturbed
Winter finally in retreat
Baseball is back

Opening Day 2014

by Philip Pecorino

What a wonder!
This year it was in the Land Down Under.

Then again, it began.
Way out West came the first test.

Californians appear in the lead
Until the rest get up to speed.

Wrigley Reverie

by Hilary Barta

The throng full of hope and "Hey, heys!"
King Kong (the big dope) could amaze
Cracker Jack and ol' Ernie
Drifting back on a journey
To those long-ago Opening Days.

Happy 100, From a New Yorker

by Stephen Jones

Today is Wrigley Field's anniversary.
One hundred years of longevity.

In New York, where short-term memory
Is "What have you done for me lately?"
It often means tearing down history
For the sake of the quick monetary.

As someone prescient once said
When the wrecking ball was poised
To bring down Ebbets Field stature,
"When it's gone, it's gone forever."

All this reflection just to say:
To Wrigley Field . . . Happy Birthday.

The Captain's Yard Sale

by James Finn Garner

A dining set of broken bats
A navy pinstripe yoga mat
A year's supply of Genny Cream
A keg signed by the vending team
A "2" carved out of northern granite
A solar-cell vibrating hammock
A zircon-slathered Yankee topper
A 2,000-gallon popcorn popper
Another ugly pair of boots
A vid lip-synching with the Roots
"2s" in crystal, onyx, steel,
Beer cans, tree trunks and fresh veal
A wondrous Joe-Girardi-shaped 'tater
A Japanese robot fellater
It's not a hoarder's dream or last mirage –
Just what's stuffed in Jeet's garage.

In Those Days

by Paul Kocak

In those days
He wrapped his arms around me
Bracketing my hands on a bat
The swing ours
Hit or miss

In those days
I felt encircled
Firm as the sun
Sure as iron
Hot or cold

In those days
We knew neither past nor future
Neither fear nor fight
Just the pitch tossed to us
Frozen in time.

Song for Jose Abreu

by Stuart Shea

Abreu, Abre me
Bring a thrilling White Sox rally,
Abre them, Abre us,
Causing such a highlights fuss.
Abre we, Abre they,
Will you hit a bomb today?
Swing that bat, oh mercy do,
Abre me, Abreu.

On First Looking Into Nash's "The Panther"

by Pat McCaughey

Bob Gibson is like Jim Palmer.
Except he's less calmer.
Should behind you McCarver crouch,
Prepare to say Ouch.
Better yet, if pitched to by Gibson,
Keep your ribs in.

Birthday in the Park

by Tony Puma

The years fly by like "line drives."
The "K's" still haunt me and
the "RBI's" are few in this
bottom-of-the-seventh game.

I try hard to even the score
with my lovable nemesis, Nature,
by tying the game and
going for extra innings.

Oh, yeah, I am up there swinging
in this twilight game.
Going for the fences,
and when I round third
and get Home, I will jump on it
with both feet.

The Jinx is Not In

by Susan Petrone

There's something I want to talk about but broach with apprehension,
For if you state the obvious, the Jinx will pay attention.

There is no monster in Lake Erie, of that you can be sure
But beware the Jinx who dwells within the salt mines off the shore.

The Cleveland Jinx is green and chunky with breath like stale burritos.
He wears flip-flops and a beer-stained jersey from Rocky Colavito.

When the team is doing poorly, you won't see the Jinx,
There's no fun in messing with a team that really stinks.

But when the Tribe shows signs of life and fans begin to hope,
The Jinx's one-word answer is a loud, resounding "Nope."

He'll fiddle with the strike zone, the pine tar, or a mitt
And anything he thinks will stop a run-scoring base hit.

The Jinx can't help it, it's his job to purloin a winning streak
He lives upon our broken dreams and random bursts of pique.

So how does the Tribe fare? Of that of which we must not speak.
All that I can safely say is it's been a hell of a good week.

Tar Search

by Michael X. Ferraro

Was that stuff on Pineda's neck
helping him pitch like the Eck?
The Red Sox requested
that it be ump-tested,
Now he's out 10 games, plus a check.

The Play

by Philip Pecorino

Oft times better part of the day
waiting for that one play.

Then, it's "Hurray"

or "What do ya say!"

and seldom just the simple, "OK."

How more beautiful could it be than to admire the 3-6-3?

Perhaps a 5-4-3 clearing the sacks such a vision might be!

Or with runners on all,

just send a ball over the wall

with a loud crack of the bat

and I'll shout "Now how 'bout that?"

A 9-4-2 with a tag on the shoe

brings you up on your feet

at the sight of the feat

and out with a "How do you do!"

Show me a 2-6-3

and a "Well, I'll say, lookie there!"

exclaimed loud and clear.

So play after play on through the day,

never leaving room for dismay,

if you treasure the game not a one is lame.

But, there come those that make you exclaim,

midst the ebb and flow of the game,

one for which no other rates the name:

the "play of the game."

Haiku

by Bob Carlton

A game of pepper –

flattened grass keeps getting

back up

The Last Time in Seattle, 06/12/2014

by Stephen Jones

A rookie stepped up to Seattle's home plate
And recorded his first major-league hit.
That was in 1995.

It's full circle time, and last night
Derek Jeter did the same: In the 1st
He got a one-out single to right.

"I'll always have fond memories of Seattle
Because this is where it began." He smiled.
This is now 2014.

In the 9th he got 40 seconds of grateful applause –
And while some are tired of this season's homage,
Few will argue

That he has been the "Face of Baseball."
No matter the stats, it is the intangible
Which makes a star.

Last night the Yankees won, 6-3, and the season
Is up for grabs. But last night Seattle remembered
It started here in 1995.

Alfonso Soriano's Outfield Fly Rule

by Hilary Barta

Playing hoops, they say, "Don't jump to pass,"
Or else Oops! you may look like an ass
Out in left never hop
Or, ball bereft, you're a flop
Being duped by a fly on the grass.

You're A Flop!

by Patrick McCaughey

With apologies to Cole Porter

You're a flop!
You're U.S. Steel!
You're a flop!
You're an Arby's meal!
You're the bunch of bums
That keep my Tums stock low.
You're Zsa Zsa's hubbys!
You're those Poor Cubbies! You're Broglioli!

You're the mistakes
Of the "Ishtar" writer!
You're the brakes
On James Dean's Porsche Spyder!
You're a worthless nine,
You're Jewish wine, you suck!
You're that black cat!
Sosa's corked bat! You're Banks' luck!

You're a flop!
The futile prayers I prayed!
You're a flop!
The '84 parade!
You're a trip to hell
To where Piniella's coaching next!
You're Elia's hate!
You're Zimmer's pate! You're really hexed!

You play as poor
As warped LPs do!
Yes, even more
Than Ticketmaster fees, too.
You're the cause
Of much applause for games you drop!
In St. Louis and New York, well, you're the top!

You're a flop!
Each fall I cry a river!
You're a flop!
You're Harry Caray's liver!
You're the thing

That hits in spring like Tunney's punch!
You're watered gin,
A Cardinal win, a Pete Rose hunch!

You're as unsure
As Yogi Berra's diction!
As a tie score
When Carlos Marmol's pitchin'!
My heart can only take so many flubs!
It's no disease that's gonna kill me –
It's you Cubs!

Solarte: The Poem

by Hart Seely

A warm, sunny day.
A sea food buffet.
A fling in the hay.
Solarte . . . in May.

A song out of tune.
Street crime in Rangoon.
A nightmare swoon.
Solarte . . . in June.

A routine pop fly.
A darkening sky.
A long, anguished sigh.
Solarte . . . July?
Solarte . . . goodbye.

Don Zimmer, RIP

by James Finn Garner

Old Zim

When I think of him

Looks like chaw and tar

And a grand har-har

To those squares

Who don't care

About baseball

And giving your all

For what you love.

And when push comes to shove,

Had Martinez been 70,

Zim would've pounded him plenty.

You're our kind of guy.

Goodbye, Popeye.

Tales from Cardinal Town

by Alan P. Rudy

Matt Adams, Matt Adams, how do you mash?

"I crush and I bash and I slash, so mash!"

Matt Adams, Matt Adams, you're so gritty.

"I am that," says the man nicknamed Big City

To minors, to minors to call up a thrower

Cards again, Cards again, find a flamethrower

To AAA, to AA, to call up an 8 or a 9.

Cards again, Cards again, not nearly so fine.

Deep Thoughts (Inner Monologue of a Gopherball)

by Michael X. Ferraro

Giancarlo, when I approached,
Via soft-serve toss of a coach
I foolishly said, "Let's be friends!"
But instead I now have the bends.

As I rocket o'er Target Field,
McCutcheon gasps and Gordon squealed.
My path now is parabolic
Forget 'roids – are you bionic?

Mr. Stanton, I hold no grudge.
I'm a baseball, not a judge.
The fans swoon like they've seen Kirby
as I leave this Home Run Derby.

Dream Come True

by R.J. Lesch

With two men out, Glen Perkins turned to look
toward the third base stands, and then he smiled.
The local boy, as in a storybook,
or sandlot fantasies of any child,
could hear the Minnesota crowd. And they
were chanting out his name, their joy undamped
as he closed out the All Star Game. They say
the Nordic folk don't often get so amped.
And closers should be ice and stone, you see.
But out there on the diamond, who could blame
A boy who once hit baseballs off a tee
For grinning big and wide? But all the same,
the closer and the catcher, not done yet,
went back to work, with one more out to get.

Clerihews for the All-Star Game

Troy Tulowitzki

Must be throwing fits. He's
The top vote-getter among NL jocks,
Yet plays for a bottom-feeder like the Rox.

Andrew McCutcheon

Walks around touching
Each and every light switch
Cuz his OCD is just a bitch.

Anthony Rizzo,

That's a big favor to owe.
You'll have to deliver, by gawd,
Before they uncover Chicago's election fraud.

Chase Utley

Needs a course in geography.
Instead of Minnesota,
He booked a flight to North Dakota.

Jose Altuve:

Smooth move, eh?
Spend the week away from Houston,
Maybe get some fishing done.

Zach Greinke

Is feeling hinky
And regrets his wish
For bottomless Minnesota hot dish.

Hunter Pence

Ended the suspense:
He scares both adults and kids
Cuz he was tragically born without eyelids.

Dellin Betances
Will take his chances,
Gird up his junk-a
And take a dive into Lake Minnetonka.

Derek Jeter
Is a 14-time All-Star repeater
And, if we trust the announcers,
Also invented sliced bread, the Internet and trousers.

Nelson Cruz
Has got nothing to lose.
Though Selig may wince,
He's gonna show up at the game dressed as Prince.

Adam Wainwright
Played the "unwritten rules" right,
Grooved the Captain a pitch to hit,
Then found himself in a world of trouble.

Miguel Cabrera,
The greatest hitter of our era.
Pitch the pill behind his back
And still he'll give that ball a whack.

Mike Trout
Didn't hit one out,
But a double and a triple
Ain't kibble.

Contributions from Hugh Briss, Hugh Encrye, Hugh Jass and Hugh Manatee.

"Now Stinking for the Phillies..."

by Stuart Shea

Darin Ruf ain't got the stuff,
And Ryan Howard's no longer powered.
Ben Revere has value unclear,
And there's little regard fo' Antonio Bastardo.
Pity Dominic Brown, whose average is down,
And Cody Asche, who is far from flashy.
Even Cliff Lee and Carlos Ruiz
Are suffering from the same disease.
So who's the chuff of this team of stiffs?
Ruben Ameero, who seems like a zero.

The Boys in Powder Blue

by Stephen Jones

1985. In years that's twenty-nine.
That's how long a drought it's been
For KC and its Royals team.
Now the powder blue, it seems,
Is set for a playoff run.
Postseason could be fun.

I, for one, am glad to see
This revisit from baseball history.

Literal Relief

by Jim Siergey

Chicago is wondering where
the Sox got their "firemen" from.
I only can ponder that they're
from *Fahrenheit 451*.

The Yankee Contracts Poem

by Hart Seely

Three more years of A-Rod,
Each, twenty million-plus.
Three more years of C.C.,
Blown tires on the bus.
Six more years of Ellsb'ry,
Just where did we go wrong?
And two more years of Beltran . . .
I will not live that long.

Two more years, Teixeira,
McCann, until '18.
Gardner through the following year,
By then, I'll have no spleen.
We'll play no one at shortstop.
Our system's hit the wall.
And two more years of Beltran . . .
Who cannot throw the ball.

Six more years, Tanaka.
Already, looking frail.
And Prado for another two.
By then, we'll own Chris Sale.
We punted in the bidding,
And so jettisoned Cano.
For two more years of Beltran . . .
Dear God, please let me go!

Our Father, up in heaven,
Where contracts loom so large,
Two hundred million buys a boat
That steers just like a barge.
We're dead throughout the order,
A slugger? No, not one!
With two more years of Beltran . . .
God, wake me when it's done.

Tony Gwynn

by the Village Elliott

With apologies to Rudyard Kipling and his "Gunga Din"

You may talk of those who bat
With reflexes like a cat,
Like Tony Gwynn, whose prowess was high art.
Played right field for childhood team,
Padre skipper's Gold Glove dream,
A southpaw five-tool player, 'ead and 'eart.
Destined for the 'All of Fame,
San Diego son became
Legend playing locally for twenty years.
Though big money thrown his way,
Stayed for "'Ometown Discount" pay,
Around the league fans paid him with more cheers.

Fans cheered, "Gwynn! Gwynn! Stalwart star!
Your sweet swing strikes spheroid far.
Though twice Series ring eluded,
When your career concluded,
Your .394 best season since World War."

Padre uniform he wore,
Was nothing much before
And rather less ag'in when he retired.
But his two-toned Padre 'at
An' eight-time entitled bat
Was all the field equipment he required.
When Dog Days of Summer's 'eat
Has grim gamers in retreat,
Avoid high 'eat that makes one's average skid,
'Eat didn't wither, make Gwynn faint,
Hit another where they ain't,
And it dropped in like three thousand others did.

Fans called, "Gwynn! Gwynn! Tony Gwynn!
Eighth bat title you did win
Puts you in the Pantheon
For most NL titles won,
Only you and 'Onus Wagner, Tony Gwynn."

'Allowed 'all in Cooperstown
Honors players of renown,

With special nod for "Inner-Circle Member,"
Those elected first time out,
For the writers have no doubt
They're Immortals whose careers fans need remember.
One Immortal who slid in
Was the Padres' Tony Gwynn,
Second San Diego son to get so tapped.
Though first two less bat crowns wrest,
William's lifetime average best
Though Gwynn's .338 best since Ted first uncapped.

Fans cried, "Goodbye, Tony Gwynn!
End in town where you begin.
Now you play on Field of Dreams
Where Immortals field the teams.
You belong on their first ballot, Tony Gwynn."

On Watching Buster Posey Hit Homers #6 and #7

by Stuart Shea

Not to be nosey,
Buster Posey,
But what has taken so long
For your bat to shower
The Giants with power?
I miss that "Bye Bye, Baby" song!

Deke of the Week

by Michael X. Ferraro

There is no base coach at second.
Otherwise, Kipnis may've reckoned
that Jeter's feigned catch was deceit
to get him to slide on his seat.
But doubled off first, he got burned
with a bitter life lesson learned:
Always keep your eye on the ball –
Not the guy who's stamped for the Hall.

Tony Takes the Wheel

by Stuart Shea

Now that he's leading the Diamondbacks,
Tony LaRussa had better make tracks.
Get rid of the manager, GM and crew,
Blow up the caravan and start something new.

Bring in some analysts, give fans a shock,
Keep Phoenix from fielding a laughing stock.
(There's already enough in AZ for comedy –
Sheriff Joe, desert sprawl, gated communities.)

Not that I'm suggesting anything rash,
But Kirk and Kevin belong in the trash.

New Genius on Scene

by the Village Elliott

G.M. Billy Beane's trading blunder,
Rent the A's, "Moneyball" asunder.
Now new genius on scene
Is across the Bay seen;
Brian Sabeen stole Beane's thunder.

October Calling

by Doug Fahrendorff

After
150 days in first place
The season
Winding down
Playoffs within reach
Success or failure
Rests
On the next ten games
Like every team
Brewers hoping
Heroes will emerge

Game 1: The World Series

by Stephen Jones

The KC Royals got drubbed at home.
Seems the umpire wouldn't give 'em a bone.
Strikes became balls or, as they say,
A quarter of the plate was taken away.
Game 1 of the Series is now history,
But that's what they're arguing in KC.

Giants' Southpaws

by the Village Elliott

Again Giants southpaw with stubble
Gives World Series foes scoring trouble.
Last three Series, Mad Baum
Won three games with aplomb;
Four score years ago, it's Carl Hubbell.

There is No "I" in "Royals"

by James Finn Garner

Hey, orange Marlins yahoo,
What gives you the right to
Wear something else than powder blue
Sitting where the world sees you?

You need to blend in with the crowd,
Not sit in garments screaming loud.
So you have a stub – think you can
Crimp our genius marketing plan?

To your Fish you think you're loyal?
Well, here everyone cheers the Royals.
Your defiance makes the brass see red!
This is America, pal, and don't forget!

Game 3: Royals Shut the Door

by Stephen Jones

Yost let loose his bullpen,
His blue barn of big horses.
Like Ben Hur's chariot team
They then shut the door
On the Giants' faces.

Game 5: Kansas City Blues

by Stephen Jones

Madison Bumgarner,
The Giants' pitching anchor,
Shut out Kansas City
And made them sing the blues.
Now the Royals have to wonder:
In Arrowhead will it be better?

It All Comes Down To

by Stuart Shea

A Baseball Fan's Heaven –
World Series Game Seven.
So Let's Turn it Up to Eleven!

Super Non-Collider

by Jim Siergey

A hit off of Bum that was erred
but Gordon was stopped there at third.
To home was not steered
Was "Posey Rule" feared?
A Shot 'Round the World now unheard.

The Seventh Game

by the Village Elliott

Once again starting pitching had sucked;
Saved by double play Joe Panik plucked;
Bochy didn't have a doubt
Mad Bum would get last out,
And Royals' title the Giants abduct.

Requiem for a Bat

by Stuart Shea

The series is over,
And I can't stand the stench.
The Royals' best option
Was nailed to the bench.

Sure, MadBum was great,
The best in a clench –
But Yost left his best pinch-hitter
Sitting on the bench.

Salvador Perez broke his knee,
Or at least gave it a wrench,
But Yost wouldn't replace him
With someone from his bench.

Now Josh Willingham's retiring,
Unlike Dame Judy Dench.
He ended his career
With his ass on the bench.

Instant Replay

by James Finn Garner

Eric Hosmer's modified mullet
MadBum casually firing bullets

Superfans from South Korea
The panicked look on Kelvin Herrera

Phantom sighting of the Freak
Plugging Aoki's defensive leak

Peavy shelled like the Hellespont
Escobar laying down a bunt???

Joe Buck opining from his *tuchus*
Of redoubtable Mike Moustakas

Gordon's single to the wall
Cool-as-*horchata* Sandoval

What the hell is Ned Yost thinking?
I'll have whatever Pence is drinking

Crawford gobbles up ground balls
Bochy weeps, and Affeldt bawls

Young Joe Panik, Dyson, Cain . . .
Can we please do it all again?

Hope of the Hot Stove League

by George Bowering

My fantasy team
gets worse and worser.
I hope I get to
draft Max Scherzer.

What I Learned from Ernie Banks

by James Finn Garner

From Jackie Robinson
I learned grace under the gun
From Satchel Paige
I learned of the illusions of age
From Dick Allen
I learned never to give in
From Hammerin' Hank Aaron
I learned to keep on keepin' on
But from Ernie Banks
I learned to give thanks.

RIP. Let's play two, forevermore.

The Clubhouse's Haiku

by Stephen Jones

My season . . . now done
My ballpark empty of life
My heart waits for Spring

Notes on Contributors

Hilary Barta is a comic book illustrator (*The Simpsons*, *SpongeBob*) and operator of the monster and noir website, *LimerWrecks*. Follow him online at *Surlly Hack Attack*.

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Bob Carlton lives and works in Garland, Texas, and has not missed a Rangers home opener since the Ballpark opened in 1994.

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Michael X. Ferraro is the author of the novel *Circus Catch*, as well as *Numbelievable* and *Tased & Amused*.

James Finn Garner is the co-founder of *Bardball* and the author of *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* and the *Rex Koko*, *Private Clown* mystery series.

Stephen Jones Baseball's mechanics, its timeless math-work, its magic... Stephen Jones, a professional writer and legal aide, was hooked. He has been published in *The New York Times* and elsewhere.

Paul Kocak is the author of *Baseball's Starry Night: Reliving Major League Baseball's 2011 Wild Card Night of Shock and Awe*. His other books include *World Serious* and *Rounding Third: Zen. Baseball. Poems*.

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Philip Pecorino is a Professor of Philosophy in CUNY and SUNY systems and has published several articles in philosophical publications, humanities publications and elsewhere.

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Tony Puma posts his poetry regularly at *tonypoetica.blogspot.com*. He is a member of various poetry groups, including the Italian-American Writers Assn., Red Wheel Barrow Poets, Paulinskill Poetry Project and Poets House (NYC).

Alan P. Rudy's love of the Cardinals was cemented by the nightmare of moving to Mets territory in '69. He's married to a Cards fan he met in the land of the Giants, is raising two ball-playing boys, and teaches sociology at Central Michigan University.

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Jim Siergey is a writer and illustrator, and author of the Cubs alternative universe odyssey, *If They Did It!* His latest book is *Cultural Jet Lag: A Retrospective*, available from Indy Planet. His other writings can be found at thethirdcity.org.

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