“I just don’t get baseball.” It was more an admission than a proclamation. And maybe it was his semi-questioning tone and the way he made her feel more eloquent, or the time of year and the memories of fall past, or how her favorite team was faring and the emotions that brought with it, maybe a combination of any or all of these things, or none of them. But this time she finally felt had something more to say than a matter-of-fact, “Well, I enjoy watching it.”

“It’s hereditary I suppose, steeped in fond memories of watching the animation it brings to the adults around you. Seeing them at their most jubilant and child-like. Seeing them as yourself, a side you only ever see when they are at a game, and perhaps occasionally watching on TV. And then, with time, seeing that same glimpse of your peers and the utter joy it brings them. How can it not be contagious? There’s more to it, but if nothing else, like many things we are drawn to, it’s the chance of reaching that same bliss, the serotonin rush that we are hard-wired to seek.

But it’s also the comfort of being lulled to sleep on long car rides by the dull background roar of the crowd, periodically punctuated by the soft crack of a bat and sporadically startled awake by either the announcer’s jolt of excitement or that of someone in the car.

And it’s the awe, as a child, of entering a building so impossibly massive and being surrounded by innumerous people, all there to participate in the same ritual. Everyone watching, not just as a passive observer, but a part of the over-all experience, performing their fandom in various ways, some more extravagant than others. I suppose for some it’s taken the place of church in that regards.

As for the game itself, like many things, it shines in moments. When the pitcher and batter are trying to simultaneously predict the other and surprise them. When a ball is hit perfectly, or expertly caught. When a player digs deep and outruns the play. There may be lulls between moments, but how is that different than any other experience? The pause builds the momentum. The negative space focuses our attention on the main subject.”