

Out Standing in My Field

A Frightful Experience, *by Dennis Knight*

It's a tired old cliché of a joke, but it describes the situation and I use it without abash as it was one moment in my life where I lay claim to the distinction. It was a summer morning in 1953, and I was nine going on ten, out standing in my field. I was lollygagging, actually, my mind anywhere but my job. A major feature of lollygagging is that your reflexes become sleepy and difficult to summon in the face of doom.

I heard the roar and felt a dawning of urgency as I focused on an object flying at me from an indeterminate place, filling my field of vision. I had myopia then, but didn't know it, and I didn't have depth perception to judge how far it was or what time I had left. It was closing fast because I could see the stitches in its face.

My choices, swiftly considered, were to turn and run, fall in a fetal position, dodge, or bat the object away to protect my precious Irish noggin. Choosing the latter, I drew my hands to my face, palms in a paddle position, shut my eyes, and pop! It was the beautiful, serene, smack of leather on leather.

I will leave you to ponder whether I made the heroic, game ending catch, championship won and my fame established, or whether the softball dribbled from my glove, allowing runners to score, the season to end and my infamy confirmed. Whatever your conclusion, I will tell you this, and I declare it loudly and happily, it was the last time I have ever been caught out standing in my field.