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Baseball Love

George Bowering

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Having written books in practically every genre, George Bowering is often introduced as someone who adores baseball, yet ironically he did not begin this book about the game until he was appointed Canada's first Poet Laureate for 2002–04. This picaresque memoir of a road trip with his fiancée through the storied ballparks of a poet's youthful dreams is built on the bargain of fiction—that the narration of someone else's life requires the listener or reader to fill in the blanks of what we know is out there, somewhere in the world, but which takes place at such a great distance of time and space from us that we can only imagine it to be real.

Beginning with the exquisite charm of listening in on Bowering as a youthful sports reporter in his home town of Oliver in 1948, "the greatest year in human history," moving through the brash hubris of his career as a star player–reporter in the Kosmic League of the 1970s, to staring down the bittersweet foul line of the Twilight League of the twenty–first century, *Baseball Love* is a book about Bowering''s life in love and the game, played with a consummate craft and skill into the paradise of what we can only ever imagine to be real, and leavened at all times by the conscious and playfully ironic chatter of the infield.

Its provenance uncertain, the diamond in the ballpark—where no cars are allowed to drive, where time stands still unless there's an out and where one adheres to the rules governing behavior in the yard—is the quintessential North American vision of paradise: a walled garden in the midst of the dark satanic mills of blind industrial progress and the chaos of the everyday in the exploited wilderness that surrounds it.

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