great verve and skill. His verbal image of a fictitious Scottish football announcer providing color commentary for a Boston Red Sox baseball game is hilarious.

Miller devotes several pages to Bud Selig's labelling of him as a baseball "purist" during a live broadcast in 1993. Then Selig was the owner of the Milwaukee Brewers franchise and at that time just about one year into playing the dubious role of Acting Commissioner of Baseball. Selig is now in the dubious position of Commissioner of Baseball. The author neither welcomes nor dismisses the sobriquet "purist" but explains how the term is understood, and misunderstood, depending upon one's specific role in bringing baseball to the broader public. His resolute answer to his own guilt or innocence as a baseball purist is a firm and unequivocal "Yes" and... then again... "No."

The reader will make his or her own judgment on the definition of a baseball "purist," and whether the term as defined applies to current broadcasting celebrities. In this century, a baseball broadcaster may not make up a narrative from board games or telegraphic shorthand; the broadcaster may be the medium for defining and presenting the baseball team as part of a modern mythic community as well. But the status of Jon Miller's career at this juncture shows that the once simple creator of narrative plays a multiplicity of roles, which form an important dynamic in the modern-day baseball experience as marketed by the club owners. Jon Miller would surely attest it was simpler when it was a just a game.

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SMITH, RED. *Red Smith on Baseball: The Game's Greatest Writer on the Game's Greatest Years.* Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2000. Pp. xi + 363. Illustrated. Index. $24.95 cb.

Because sportswriting has always been treated as the bastard child of literature, those who enjoy it always want to anthologize and collect it in definitive volumes. This practice gives the work an air of scholarship and weightiness that no newspaper sports page ever could attain otherwise. The sports page, in its best form, is something we glance at—finding the box scores, skimming through the pertinent articles, and only going into deeper involvement with those one or two columns that grab our attention or mention the home team in some detail. A good sports column is a blend of journalism's objectivity with a touch of the poet's pen: a watercolor done in black and white, yet offering all the color and flavor of an event that is, by its very nature, ephemeral. A sports article is short. It is read in one quick sitting between stops on the commuter train or over a coffee during a break in a busy afternoon. It is not meant to be weighty, but effervescent; a recap of an arbitrary action, as all sport is, given a momentary purpose in the familiarity of print. The sports page is a context of the day's events, a history folded and refolded in on itself until the reader gains a sense of what took place in broad, general terms.

So, by its very nature, collections like *Red Smith on Baseball* can be aesthetic failures. At their best, they have to be read piecemeal, two maybe three articles at a time, to capture that newspaper flavor and the spirit of the transient. The trick in reading Red Smith is wanting to stop, since Smith was an exceptional sportswriter. But to try and plow through the book from beginning to end is to miss the charm of Red Smiths work. Sportswriting,

like so much in the mass media, is a disposable form, meant to be consumed in one bite and then discarded for (supposedly) more serious concerns. Despite this intent, Red Smith has been widely circulated in book form, notably *Out of the Red* (1950), *Views of Sport* (1954), *The Best of Red Smith* (1963), *Press Box: Red Smith's Favorite Sports Stories* (1974), and, posthumously, *To Absent Friends* and *The Red Smith Reader* (both 1982). But Red Smith himself wrote about the impulse to reprint old sports columns in the introduction to his 1974 collection entitled *Strawberries in Wintertime.*

> The question of what to do with old newspaper columns isn't quite the same as how to dispose of used razor blades, but the difference is negligible.... This is especially so in a field like sports where today's defeat makes yesterday's victory meaningless.... Then why preserve dead columns for public display as the remains of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin are displayed half a century after his death? The answer, if there is one, is: Because everything written is part of the record of its time. Everyone who writes reflects the age in which he lives, and this is no less true of the sports reporter than of the dramatist, essayist or historian.

During the height of Red Smith's popularity in the mid-1950's, he was syndicated in over 70 papers with twenty million readers. *Red Smith on Baseball,* as the publishing blurb tells us, contains some of Red Smith's most memorable columns—167 of them to be exact—starting with the dropped third strike in the 1941 World Series and finishing in January of 1981, one year before his death. In between, there is coverage of almost every important event to take place in baseball, from World Series conclusions to the first appearances and final chapters of great baseball lives. A sport historian might be interested in the columns on the changing face of labor-management relations that Smith covers so thoroughly in his work, while a casual fan would skip those parts to get to the vivid descriptions of the games themselves. These columns are the artifacts of a bygone day, a firsthand account of what happened by one of the most respected and admired of all sportswriters.

Still, it is an awful burden to be labeled "The Game's Greatest Writer." There are a lot of good sportswriters who covered baseball, from Grantland Rice and Ring Lardner to Jimmy Cannon and Tom Boswell. I do not think it is a title Smith himself would ever claim, although he was proud of his work and the responsibility of doing it on a daily basis. His writing, which won a Pulitzer Prize for Distinguished Commentary in 1976, is terse and to the point, workmanlike in every aspect. He was not of the Gee-Whiz School of the Golden Age of Sports Writing, although he admired Grantland Rice as a writer and counted him as one of his closest friends. In his biography of Smith, Ira Berkow quotes him as saying that Rice's approach was "perfect for the fun-loving times" of the 1920s, but Smith himself belonged to a second generation of sportswriters, more factual, more objective, and critical of the game behind the game. Smith saw himself as a blue-collar sportswriter, often laboring over his work day after day, but also seeing the game from the working man's viewpoint. While he might respect and admire the players, he did not deify them in purple prose the way Grantland Rice did; his prose and style humanized the people he wrote about. Writing of the end of the 1946 World Series, the famous Enos Slaughter dash for home, that cost the Red Sox and manager Joe Cronin the world championship, Smith focused not on the celebration of the victors but the loss in human terms.

"At the end the Cardinals hoisted [winning pitcher] Breechen to their shoulders but other players, clamoring to get near him, reached up and hauled him down like a goal post. As they disappeared from the field, Cronin came out of the first-base dugout and pushed slowly through the crowd. Now and then a man hurrying past reached out to tap his big shoulders. Joe didn't lift his head" (29).

While Smith could sing poetically about the greatness of Walter Johnson or Babe Ruth on the occasion of their passing, he also celebrated the journeyman ballplayer, like the Tony Lazzeris and Hugh "Losing Pitcher" Mulcahy. His prose was peppered with phrases and images that recalled not the halls of Valhalla but the streets of New York. In a column describing Pittsburgh's poor attendance record, he wrote, "The way the Pirates have been drawing, a guy could be rubbed out in left field and the body might not be found for weeks" (149).

Smith was also something of a humorist, although it was humor penned in a style that suggested the wit and detachment of the professional observer, ironic rather than just funny. In a column covering a 1948 game between the Boston Red Sox and their much-hatred rivals, the Yankees, he wrote of the bloodlust of the Bosox fans as "The 31,354 specimens penned in the park had a shine on their faces, the sweatily eager look that a bullfight crowd wears when the bull is five runs ahead of the matador in the ninth inning" (64). And his phrasing could be colorful and descriptive when it had to be, but always with a jab at the reporter's art: "Hermanski smashed a drive to the scoreboard. Henrich backed against the board and leaped either four or fourteen feet into the air. He stayed aloft so long he looked like an empty uniform hanging in its locker. When he came down he had the ball" (46).

As the title of his collection *Strawberries in Wintertime* suggests, Red Smiths baseball writings were the product of summer days but the fun is in enjoying them all year around. Although labeled a sportswriter, Red Smith was something more. He was a perceptive observer of the American scene, a fighter for what he saw as the underprivileged or underclass in the sport machine, and a remarkable humorist. Like those summer berries, *Red Smith on Baseball* should be consumed not in handfuls at a time, but singly, savoring and appreciating the taste of every one as it is consumed.

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DUQUETTE, JEROLD J. *Regulating the National Pastime.* Westport, CT Praeger, 1999. Pp. 184. $59.95 cb.

A primary focus of study in the history of baseball has been the locus of power. Owners gained the upper hand over the players in the late nineteenth century via the use of the infamous reserve clause. By the turn of the century as the American League was absorbed into the national agreement, the reserve clause was institutionalized, and major league baseball owners assumed control of the game's institutions. The regulation of baseball in the twentieth century, according to political scientist Gerald Duquette, had four distinct phases which, related both to events within the game and national political phenomena.