

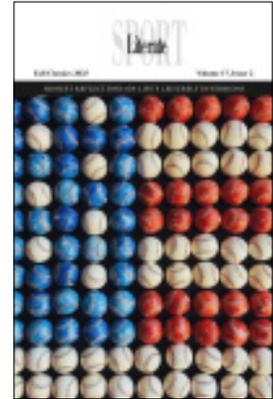
# SPORT LITERATE'S "Fall Classics 2025" on Deck October 2025

by William Meiners

Friends of *Sport Literate*,

With baseball playoffs in the works and a World Series on the near horizon, we've got a seasonally appropriate publication that's entertaining and useful. Our "Fall Classics 2025" could be just the thing between innings if your party crowd is into poetry readings. Should I root for my favorite city of this final four (and I've only been through Toronto's airport), I'd pull for an Emerald City celebration of the Mariners' first Series win.

This pub's lineup begins with nine baseball contributors (also well-timed) and follows with a slew of poets and writers on golf, tennis, running, football, fishing, fighting, basketball, and (for that not-so-far-off winter), some ice reflections. Hockey ice, not ICE, the masked Neanderthals chasing immigrants.



You'll find both *SL* veterans and rookies in these pages, including Christopher Barry, David Blumenfeld, Mikaela Brewer, Charlie Brice, Sheila Burpee Duncan, Michael DeFranco, Peter Fong, Michael Gaspeny, Joshua Hall, Matthew Johnson, Larry Kilman, Sydney Lea, Flavian Mark Lupinetti, Roseanne McCullough, Robin Michel, Holmes Miller, Matt W. Miller, Scott Palmieri, Shelby Raebeck, David Ram, Jim Read, Carol W. Runyan, Ralph James Savarese, Ron Smith, Kareem Tayyar, Rob Vance, and Robert Wallace. If my accounting is correct, that's 27 contributors. Same number of outs needed to win a nine-inning game.

Are we on your reading list? If not, you can fix that by signing up for a two-issue, [\\$20 subscription](#) on our website.

## SL NEWS & NOTES

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### Submission Break



For the poets and writers sending us work (which we always appreciate), we're taking a break. Not a long one, but from October 15 to December 15, we will not be reading any submissions. We've got our decks cleared to date, so feel free to submit during that time. We'll get back on the reading horse near Christmas. All seeking publication, even Floridian dipshits who call people fat when their "academic work" is rejected, can find our guidelines and submit on [our website](#).

## BASEBALL FUTURE

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Our first issue of 2026 will likely be a late spring/summer affair. To give you a little teaser, we offer two of those contributors here. Howard Wach and David Harris-Gershon, both *SL* newcomers, follow with an essay and a prose poem that each play some homage to the New York Yankees.

## Memoirs of a Yankee Fan of a Certain Age

by Howard Wach

I turned 70 last February, a scary number that pushed me deeper into the practice of looking backward in decade-long chunks, a survey of love, joy, fear — the works. The New York Yankees occupy 60-plus years' worth of that retrospective space, and their fortunes, I have discovered, uncannily aligned with my own.



Every baseball fan knows the quasi-religious drill. The annual worship cycle begins in February and ends in late October if things go well, or sometime in August if not. We attend nine-inning revival meetings and tie our emotions to a stubborn communal faith. We indulge in a respite from the real world and feel a superstitious jolt when tuning in the game causes our team to collapse. It's powerful stuff.

To extend the religious metaphor, these are the revealed truths I've found behind the memory door. Yankee destinies matched my first act: a happy childhood, miserable adolescence, and rocky passage to adulthood. Further down the road, midway through the second act, my team and I shared a perfectly timed renewal. A homecoming, a redemption that sweetened my passage through the middle-aged householder years.

First let's set the context. After winning 14 pennants and nine World Series titles in 16 years, the Yankees wandered through the American League wilderness from 1965 to 1976. That 11-year blip of mediocrity ended 49 years ago, footnote to a century of winning and stretches of utter dominance. I hear the objections already. Eleven years? Nothing. A nanosecond in so many baseball chronologies of dashed hopes and broken dreams. Mets fans will reflexively flip me the bird. Even after their 21st century resurrections, Wrigley Bleacher Bums and Red Sox Nation will snicker and jeer. Fair enough. I know everybody hates the Yankees. They hated the Boss (so did I, sometimes), they hated Reggie, they hated A-Rod, they hated entitlement, arrogance, and the money, money, money. I get all that. Still, it's been 16 years since the last Yankee championship in 2009, a full generation since Joe Torre's team ruled the baseball universe. The 2024 World Series debacle will live in infamy (or *schadenfreude*) for a long time. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

[Read more...](#)

**Howard Wach** is a semi-retired City University of New York academic. In his former life he wrote and published articles and essays about academic history and educational technology. He has now sworn off footnotes and bloated prose. His post-academic writing has appeared in the [Palisades Review](#), the [Jewish Writing Project](#), and [Judith Magazine](#). He is currently mourning the Yankees' most recent October failure and preparing to wait till next year. He also bangs on the piano when the spirit moves him.

## Greensboro Grasshoppers

(High-A – Pittsburgh Pirates)

by David Harris-Gershon

Greensboro's baseball brass once decided puns were good for business, naming its minor league team the "Bats" — its logo a purple, flying mammal wielding a Louisville Slugger.



The team rebranded to the Greensboro Grasshoppers in 2005 and canvassed fans to name the new mascot, a fuzzy, green figure with bushy, orange eyebrows, the winning selection from over 300 entries "Guilford."

Guilford County, North Carolina moved its seat from Guilford Court House to Greensboro in 1808.

The American Revolutionary War's liminal moment materialized at the Battle of Guilford Court House when, on March 15, 1781, British General Charles Cornwallis marched 2,000 troops from New Garden

into a stand of Patriot cherubim, their perched muskets ripping holes through human flesh, littering the fields with limbs, torn uniforms, crushed skulls.

The Garden of Eden was a setup, Adam lacking the cognition needed to obey a command, the very cognition disobeying bestowed: an understanding of good and bad, an understanding of consequences.

Cornwallis claimed victory at the Battle of Guilford Court House, his army crawling out of North Carolina, control of the South lost, the victory Pyrrhic.

Most Americans view waking up for work as a Pyrrhic victory while billionaires build Hawaiian bunkers, rent Italian cities and fly to space.

In 279 BCE, Pyrrhus defeated the Romans while losing everything and exclaimed, "One more such victory and we are lost."

On Father's Day, June 19, 2022, the Grasshoppers lost 16-10 in 11 innings to the Hudson Valley Renegades in a game with 15 pitchers, seven hit batters, five errors and four ejections, the first coming after Abraham Gutierrez barreled over the Renegades' first baseman to beat out a double play.

When Abraham was commanded to slaughter his son, Sarah's only child, why didn't he say, "Fuck off?"

Greensboro's first minor league baseball team in the early 1900s was called the "Patriots," an homage to the Battle of Guilford Court House, to those who were slaughtered, to those who did the slaughtering.

"We want people to be able to identify with the team name," said Greensboro General Manager Tom Howe after announcing the new Grasshoppers moniker, and while the word has allusions to the game — 'grass' recalling the playing surface and 'hopper' slang for a bouncing grounder — I wonder what Howe was thinking, that we identify with the insect's impulse for invading fields, swarms bent on destruction wherever they settle?

Panama's red-winged grasshopper is often mistaken for a bird in flight, its crimson wings firecrackers emitting crepitations audible for hundreds of yards, its zigzag pattern suggesting confusion, or delight.

In the Panamanian fishing village of Puerto Caimito, Mariano Rivera took to the beach with friends during low tides, carrying milk cartons for gloves, tree branches for bats, tightly wound fishing line the ball, the game a hobby, a break from his father's commercial fishing boat, hauling in sardines and seaweed and debris year-round.

Rivera barely spoke English when he arrived in Greenville, a long-shot prospect signed for pennies by the New York Yankees, but after posting a 3.4 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 1990, everyone knew: he was a catch.

Rivera's plaque resides in Cooperstown, the only player in MLB history unanimously voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

I think about Mariano Rivera's journey from impoverished fishing village to Cooperstown and imagine, had the journey transpired in today's America, Rivera would have been tackled by masked ICE agents in downtown Greenville, thrown into an unmarked van and shipped to El Salvador.

**David Harris-Gershon's** work has appeared previously in the *Colorado Review*, *Passages North*, and *Tupelo Quarterly*. His memoir — *What Do You Buy The Children of the Terrorist Who Tried to Kill Your Wife?* — was published by Oneworld (London, 2014).