

The Fourth on the Fifth

On July the Fifth, I looked for the Fourth.

I saw a firecracker, lying torn and silent on the pavement.

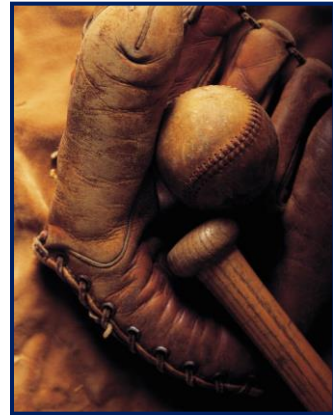
I saw a picnic basket, thrown recklessly into the corner of a closet.

I saw a swimsuit, hanging limp and lifeless across a lawn chair.

I saw a baseball bat, a fielder's mitt beside it, standing on a patio.

I saw an old, wooden ice cream freezer sitting abandoned on a shelf.

I saw a set of horseshoes, the dust of their day in court still clinging to iron frames.



I saw a bottle of suntan lotion and a pair of dark glasses reposing on a cluttered desk.

I saw a garden hoe propped beside the door of a shed.



I saw yellow-red tomatoes, lining a window sill, ripening in the sun.

I saw dirt-streaked tennis shoes reclining in a porch swing.

I saw the leftovers of a barbecue-chicken feast.

I saw pretty girls with red skin and loose clothing.

I saw a picnic table, which looked strangely bare.

I saw three beer cans, clustered in a roadside ditch.

I saw a ballpark, its bleachers mute.

I saw all of these, but I did not see the Fourth on the Fifth. All I saw was the evidence that it had come and gone.

I looked again – and I found it.

(more)



I found it in the beauty of a young woman's smile.

I found it in the strength of a man's hands who worked on an assembly line.

I found it in the tenderness of a mother holding a baby to her breast.

I found it in the wisdom of an old man, his head crowned with the whiteness of the years.

I found it in the faith of a little boy's prayer.

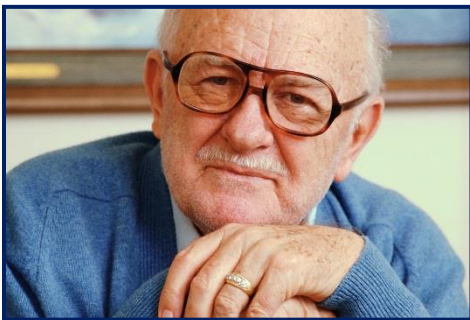
I found it in the friendship of a handshake.

I found it in the humility of a soldier who knelt at an altar to pray.

I found it in the hope of a grandfather as he cradled a child in his arms.

I found it in the tears of forgiveness of a woman whose son had confessed some wrong.

I found it in the freedom a man feels as he looks out over a farm he has bought with the sweat of his brow.



I found it in the love that binds a man and a woman together.

I found the Fourth on the Fifth. I found the true spirit of 1776 – the character of America herself – dwelling within the hearts and lives of a great people.

God, may it always be there.

– Beecher Hunter