

James Landis
Whiffle Ball
c. 1994

"I hate when this happens," I thought to myself as I watched the funnel cloud tearing up the part of Oakwood I could see from my window. Predictably, the transformer, which normally minded its own business and stayed in the alley behind my house where it belonged, chose that particular time to come crashing through my window, complete with telephone pole and most of the various wires usually associated with high-voltage transformers. It was very inconvenient.

When I finally regained consciousness, I saw something that looked entirely not unlike a large black cat sitting directly on my face. I took the liberty of removing it, but what I saw afterward looked remarkably similar.

"I wonder why the power's out," I thought to myself as I got up and walked toward what I guessed was a door. I opened what was definitely a door. I stepped out into what should have been my hallway.

"Auntie Em!" I decided, as I plummeted toward what I wasn't entirely sure was the earth. Clearly, my hall hadn't been where it should have been. I kept falling. I was beginning to get irritated. Unless I was falling toward a black hole (which I could rule out due to the breathable air in my general vicinity), then it didn't seem too unreasonable to expect to run into a large piece of...

Sponge, I decided, after I did finally collide with it. And it smelled vaguely like...wheat. I got up and flossed my toes.

"I hate wheat," I concluded, finally removing the last of it from between my metatarsals. I began to walk in no particular direction, and promptly more of the wheat wedged itself in my feet.

"I am truly enjoying this!" I screamed at the uncooperative wheat sponge I was in the process of traversing. The sponge said nothing. I continued on, trying to ignore the fact that I had a moderate harvest for socks. I was also trying to ignore my inability to see any color that was not black, a task which was considerably more difficult than the first.

Presently, I reached a large hill. I quickly began to climb it, hoping to escape the wheaty nightmare below. No such luck. The infernal legumes continued to cover the spongy terrain, and I guessed I would find no relief.

It was a short walk to the top, and an even shorter fall down the opposite slope. Now I had wheat in my face, too. It tasted like more than just wheat, though. There was a hint of yeast and flour to it, almost like a bread shop. But not quite.

I continued on in the direction I had been going (after removing the wheat from my orifices), finally coming to another slope of roughly the same gradient. This time I followed along the base of it until it turned sharply at a 90° angle. I followed this corner up the slope with my hand. It formed a sort of spongy valley. I decided to walk along the base of the intersecting slope instead of up the valley. It too ended in a 90° turn.

I seemed to be in some sort of square pit with sloping sides. A square wheaty pit. A square wheaty pit ... with ... something ... sticky running down the side of it. Something sweet. It tasted like maple syrup. I ran up the slope to find the source of this anomaly.

Unfortunately, I was a bit too hasty, and I found that the adjacent pit was completely full of the sticky viscous fluid. Unfortunately, I had fallen into it headfirst.

That day had not gone extremely well. When I finally awoke, I was back in my own house, the large portion of Oakwood that I saw being destroyed through my window looked normal, and the transformer no longer parked itself inconveniently through my window. The government denies everything, but I know it all happened. The thing that looked entirely not unlike a cat was chewing on some wheat under my bed.