

just pulled into richmond kentucky... playing here friday night, then to berea,kentucky on saturday night... then to chapel hill, then home for a few days... coming from earls in st. paul...

driving last night from Ft. Wayne on Rt. 30 across southern Indiana to hook up with Rt. 75 South in Ohio... vast, dark, raining incessantly and simply beautiful... I had the yankees and detroit game on, two classic old school baseball teams, one of which I know can trace their heritage back 100 years... and around 11pm, in classic, thrilling baseball fashion, the detroit tigers came from 5 down to tie it in the bottom of the 9th, with 2 on, 2 out, and a full count to the batter, and it was wonderful, and gripping and I listened, glued to the side speakers in the chevy, as this drama unfolded in front of me, live, pitch by pitch, in true radio fashion...

I could have been listening to sandy kofax or harmon kilebrew or even joe dimaggio... it was live baseball detroit tigers radio as I have never experienced... and I sweated, swung, cursed and strained with the noble detroit tigers as we struggled to beat the visiting Yankees team... then in the 10th the Tigers hit safely into a classic set with runners at the corners and with the screams of the fans by the backstop rolling like waves across the air you could just barely hear the announcer try to get above the din of the hometown crowd and announce in a full throated holler that Detroit had gone ahead by 1 run and the game was over...

I sat backward in my seat, exhausted, sweating and exhilarated, and I loosened my white knuckle clutch grip on the wheel of my chevy ever so slowly, trying to savor the last drop of my emotions and feelings that in the blink of an eye and a swing of the bat had taken me a million years and a hundred lifetimes back to a hot, late afternoon setting sun twilight on a hard dirt baseball diamond and I looked at myself, taking off my mask and heading across the dusty infield towards the dugout on my last game as a little league catcher on a baseball team.... the sweet smell of oiled rawlings rawhide, the moist, thick heaviness of a sweat soaked rough cloth uniform and the magic elixir whiff of a bag full of wooden bats and practice balls reached out and engulfed me, covered me in baseball and boyhood, and connected me with all that is great and good and baseball...

I was cryin' like a 3rd grader by the time I turned onto 75 south and headed for Cincinnati, Ohio and Richmond, Kentucky... leaving the yankees, the detroit tigers - and an amazing moment - somewhere out in the vast, rainy, black emptiness of southern indiana, somewhere between Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Lima, Ohio... and the land of the radio baseball gods...