

*Rounding Third* by Richard Dresser

MICHAEL:

Dear God, please let him catch this ball. Just this once let him know what it feels like to have the ball stay in his glove and not go bouncing past so he chases it in a mad terror with everyone screaming and when he finally finds it he has no idea what to do. We've done that. Many times. Let him catch this ball. Let him have this one memory for the rest of his life, that summer afternoon when the ball fell in his glove and stayed there.

Now God, if you're really there—and for the purposes of right now, I'm assuming you are—this is a pretty small request. Last year I asked you to let my wife live, and yes, that was a big one and I know you had your reasons for what happened, which I try to respect although I will never understand. But this should be a no-brainer. The bases are loaded, the score is tied, it's the fifth inning, Frankie has already struck out three times.

I guess what I'm trying to tell you is this: I need to feel hope. I want to believe there's a purpose to all this. That somewhere there's some meaning to the dropped fly balls and the endless hours in the hospital waiting room and the daily dread of getting out of bed. I don't need much, but I need something—a hint, a sign, a quick “thumbs-up” from the Home Office. Just once, I need this boy to catch this ball. Please.