

Boxing at Silly Mid-On

The fielder in middle age
does not take up a post
at Long or Deep Square
Leg willingly. Would rather

focus on eye and hand
jiving in the covers
or at silly mid-on.
A ball exploding

off the bat can still
be caught by a fifty
year old, palms and
fingers hard from years

of typing and clapping.
Time to return In flannels,
to dive for a catch
and leave turf again

on the knees. To say
to the batsman,
do not underestimate
the beard in your face.

I think of heavyweight
boxing. Both Ali and
Foreman came back
champions.

Indran Amirthanayagam, February 19, 2012

Latter-Day Cricket

When is the right time
to give up bat and ball,
become a specialist fielder,
good for a body stop
in the covers, a catch
on the boundary line
near the snack shop?

Fours and sixes fill
every over these days
in the 20-20 matches,
and a number nine
or ten reads in the pavilion
as the balls tick over,
and specialist batsmen

play specialist shots
showing extreme patience,
to rival the cold-blooded
defeatism of the men
who round out the team,
and keep it consistent
with the old rule,

of eleven players
gathered on the green
before the shiny new ball
or in the stands reading
about the game
as it used to be played
among gentlemen

who declared courageously
their innings closed
to force a result, to get
the opponents out
to the last man, not
on run rate or during
batting power plays.