

## **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.