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John Bradshaw

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Out at Third

"April is the coolest month"

by John Bradshaw

You know it. That Prufrock puppet got it all wrong.
He saw spring and freaked.
The thought that earth's green is not his green—
Well, it just pissed him off.
Being a self-absorbed thoughtful sort,
Prufrock couldn't just admit his jealousy.
Nature's got him trumped.
If he lived in his gut, he'd probably just say it straight.
But heaven forbid that a naked—albeit misplaced—passion
Should wend its way through his veins.
He's gotta clear it through Cognition Central.
If it isn't approved by jellyspined Protocol, then forward it
To the Convoluted Ego.
We'll just rationalize it up a bit, till it seems all spiritual-like.
Then we can hold our seething envy and feel vindicated.

The problem is the boy never played baseball.
If he had, then he'd have known the seasons of the world.
Every spring, it's the same thing.
The bitter stiffness of winter gets sweated out
As we remember the Fundamentals:
Pitch-and-catch, hit-and-run, slide-and-tag.
The green of spring is true green;
Baseball knows the season of the world.
It ain't no phony Cambridge game of bridge,
But a real ball game, dirt and leather, sun and sweat
And the cloudless blue of deepest wisdom.

The only thing cruel about April
Is that there's no one to blame but yourself.
If you don't stretch it out in your sprint for third,
If you just dog it every day out in left field,
Then you sit out the summer on the bench.
There's no one to blame but yourself.
And you know it –

And that's why
Prufrock should have played baseball.

