

LINDA GEBROE



*No Particular Place to Go*

*W*hen the game ended, I had nowhere to go. The Giants won on a pitching gem by Billy Swift, and it had been a pleasure to watch. Samurai baseball, he'd sliced through the batting order of the Mets several times over, each player returning forlornly to the dugout for lack of a hit.

I lingered a while, watched the bench players come out and congratulate the starters, the team congratulate itself, smiles on the field and then into the clubhouse. The grounds crew took over then, men in white coveralls, baseball's equivalent to the cleaning lady. One guy dragged the infield; that is, he drove something like a lawnmower that had a big rake on the end of it that smoothed out the infield dirt. This was one of the most sensual acts I'd ever witnessed outdoors. The man drove in curves, leaning to the left, then to the right, making sure he'd covered everything. The action approximated ice skating, first the right leg goes forward and glides, then the left forward and glide, all the while hands clasped behind the back. It was a very feminine thing to watch.

The public address system switched from big and booming to soft and mellow – the better to drag the infield to. The music was saxophone, the moves were soft, there was room in the stands, the sun was bright but soft in the late afternoon, the field was greener than it looks on TV, the seats were orange, the sky was blue. Like daycare for grown-ups.

I stayed as long as I could and even as the usher approached, I stood my ground. I would not leave one millisecond sooner than I absolutely had to. He finally came within earshot and said, "Time to go," a little wistfully, because he understood that I was just where I wanted to be.

And so I turned and headed out, up thirty or forty rows, and when I reached the top, I turned to look back at my sanctuary, which stood still, green and blue and orange and a couple of colors in between.

I reached the concourse, the concession area, where a few other fans were still making their way out of the park. The game seemed distant now, just leaving was becoming its own activity. I stood high atop the Candlestick escalator, overlooking Hunters Point, downtown, the Bay Bridge, the bay. I was on top of the world with nowhere to go.