The Idol

Richard Agard*
There's no use waiting around, kid," the older boy barked at me. "They have a lot of different doors they can sneak out of." He looked like he was at least eleven or twelve, and he did have a White Sox baseball cap on, but that still didn't mean anything. *This is where the man taking tickets told me to wait and I'm going to.*

The White Sox had beaten the Indians, and Rocky had struck out three times, but I had to see Rocky and at least get his autograph. *Besides, everybody on that train going back home will be staring at my baseball with Rocky's name on it, and they will think I am his best friend or maybe even his brother.*

I stuck my nose through one of the holes in the wire fence. The sun was shining brightly outside, but the tunnel under the stadium remained dark enough so I couldn't see the other end. The game had been over for almost an hour and none of the players had come out yet. There had been quite a few boys waiting with me, but they had all left, or else were down at the White Sox' gate. That's where my brother and daddy were. My brother would sure be mad when I told him I talked to the best baseball player ever. What if Rocky asked me to be a bat boy or something? Would all my friends at home be jealous when I would get out of the start of school this fall. I should have brought my baseball cards of him. *He'll never believe me when I tell him I have four duplicates of him, or that when I'm captain at school, my team is always called the Indians.*

*I wish that sun would go under a cloud or something. My new Indian's cap had sweat all over the inside, and my*
ball was getting smudged by the dirty sweat from my hands. It was shady down by the White Sox' gate, but I was going to wait here. While staring down at the White Sox' gate I saw some of the players coming out. I could recognize Louie Aparicio and Nellie Fox from my baseball cards that I had carefully studied before leaving home yesterday. Oh no, there was my stupid brother having Nellie Fox sign his program. Big deal . . . he was just a runt. Rocky was twice as big and could hit a ball twice as far.

I turned my head back to the Indians' gate, but the only thing I could see was old hot dog wrappers and pop cups. My face was starting to hurt from being pressed against the fence, and I could feel sweat soaking through my new Indians' t-shirt.

_Gosh darn where . . . _but then I heard shuffling footsteps and pressed the wire even harder against my sunburned face, but I didn't care. I held my breath, and this must have made me sweat even more, as I could feel something trickling down my arm under my shirt. The sunlight hit their faces as they came out of the tunnel, but neither one was Rocky. They had to walk about ten yards before they could pass through the gate where I was standing, and then I would ask them where Rocky was. My eyes were glued on them until I saw Rocky right behind them. He had on dark glasses, but that was his face, the same face as on my baseball cards and in my scrapbook. I stood staring as he neared the gate walking fast, but then I saw all those dumb kids down by the White Sox' gate starting to run towards me. I moved right in front of the gate Rocky was coming through, with my ball in my outstretched hand, but I couldn't believe this was really happening. I was really standing beside him.

"Get the hell out of the way, boy. I don't have time now." I thought I saw Rocky's lips move, and a feeling came over me like the times daddy would spank me for being bad. I turned and thought I saw him running towards a bus with other kids chasing him, but I wasn't sure, because now my eyes were starting to sweat.