

# Casey



**I**T LOOKED extremely rocky  
For the Mudville nine that day;  
The score stood two to four,  
With but an inning left to play;  
So when Cooney died at second,  
And Burrows did the same,  
A pallor wreathed the features  
Of the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go,  
Leaving there the rest,  
With that hope which springs eternal  
Within the human breast.  
For they thought: "If only Casey  
Could get a whack at that,"  
They'd put up even money now,  
With Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey,  
And likewise so did Blake,  
And the former was a pudlin',  
And the latter was a fake;  
So on that stricken multitude  
A deathlike silence sat,  
For there seemed but little chance  
Of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a "single,"  
To the wonderment of all,  
And the much-despised Blakey  
"Tore the cover off the ball."  
And when the dust had lifted,  
And they saw what had occurred,  
There was Blakey safe at second,  
And Flynn a-huggin' third.

Then, from the gladdened multitude  
Went up a fervent yell;  
It rumbled in the mountain tops,  
It rattled in the dell;  
It struck upon the hillside  
And rebounded on the flat,  
For Casey, mighty Casey,  
Was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner  
As he stepped into his place;  
There was pride in Casey's bearing  
And a smile on Casey's face;  
And when responding to the cheers,  
He lightly doffed his hat,  
No stranger in the crowd could doubt  
'Twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him  
As he rubbed his hands with dirt;  
Five thousand tongues applauded  
When he wiped them on his shirt;

Then when the writhing pitcher  
Ground the ball into his hip,  
Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye,  
A sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere  
Came hurtling through the air,  
An' Casey stood a-watchin' it  
In mighty grandeur there;  
Close by the sturdy batsman  
The ball, unheeded, sped;  
"That ain't my style!" said Casey;  
"Strike one!" the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people,  
There went up a muffled roar,  
Like the beating of storm waves  
On the stern and distant shore.  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!"  
Shouted someone on the stand;  
And it's likely they'd have killed him,  
Had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity  
Great Casey's visage shone;  
He stilled the rising tumult,  
He maddened the game go on;  
He signaled to the pitcher,  
And once more the spheroid flew,  
But Casey still ignored it,  
And the umpire said, "Strike two!"

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands,  
And the echo answered "Fraud!"  
But one scornful look from Casey  
And the audience was awed;  
They saw his face grow stern and cold,  
They saw his muscles strain,  
And they knew that Casey  
Wouldn't let the ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lips,  
His teeth are clenched in hate;  
His pounds with cruel vengeance  
His bat upon the plate;  
And now the pitcher holds the ball,  
And now he lets it go,  
And now the air is shattered  
By the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land  
The sun is shining bright,  
The band is playing somewhere  
And somewhere hearts are light;  
And somewhere men are laughing  
And somewhere children shout,  
But there is no joy in Mudville—  
Mighty Casey has struck out.



Tom Thayer