

I'm sitting on a fire hydrant half way between my forty-fifth and forty-sixth season
enhancing my tan while I wait for my pals to arrive with the tickets.

"Peanuts!"

And a street vendor, leaning against a blond brick wall fifty feet beyond the centerfield
fence, cries

"Peanuts!"

Sounding somewhat like a cricket because the squall he makes is louder than his body
should allow.

"Peanuts!"

Three cops sitting sidesaddle on a blue horse, side arms bulging out conspicuously,
adjust their doughnut bellies as they chit chat takin' it easy on their fair weather
patrol.

"Peanuts!"

Ten Wichita Kansas corn fed bullheads plug up the intersection hunting for Gate F.
The cop nearest the traffic jam reluctantly does his duty with a groaning eyeball
roll.

"Down there, sir. Gate F is down there
Where the big F is."

"Peanuts!"

People plash by in streams of placid pastels. Pops and his buzz head kids.
Wendy and hers. Bertha and what could be children, but what may be baby
hippopotami tuggin' at their mama as they lumber across the street
linked together hand to hand -- the last one dragging an antique catcher's mitt.

"Peanuts!"

From the top of the plug I shoot my scanner out into the loveliness of lots and lots of ladies,
dolls, dames. Over forty me can't help being a pig sometimes, especially at the ballpark. Hell,
when I'm out here I'm like a WGN cameramen zoomin' in on

"Peanuts!"

Some bad habits are hard to kick.

Anyway, I spot peroxide blond wearing a pink halter-top, eating a polish sausage at the beer stand across the street, making lipstick autographs on the bun. "*Peanuts!*" I fantasize that she's signing it for me.

"Got tickets?"

(Something tries to invade my daydream.)

"Got tickets?"

(It starts to dissolve.)

"I said, d'ya got tickets?"

(Is this my friend?)

"Hey! I'm talkin' to you!"

(Not my friend.)

"All you got to say is yes or no.
You people.
You people and your looks."

It's a hawk, a hustler, a young man scalping a fist of fake tickets. He's tough, muscular, feral -- Red Dog dago tee. His eyes peg me reactively. I feel my own opaque glare matching up to his. For a second we stare coldly into each other eyes.

"All I asked you was if you had tickets.
And if you do, just say no thank you.
Save me the hard guy look."

"Peanuts!"

"You people.
When are you people
Ever gonna stop
Lookin' down at us?"

"Peanuts!"

"You don't own this street."

"Peanuts!"

"And you don't own me."

"Peanuts!"

"And if you don't have the guts
To say what you're thinkin',
Then don't parade around
As if you got the guts to do anything else."

"Peanuts!"

"You people."

Down the block and across the street Big Mama leans over the porch rail and hollers "Ramon!"
"Ramon!" who runs up to the cricket on the corner holdin' out a handful of money cryin':

*"Peanuts! Peanuts!
I want some peanuts!"*

*"You got 'em little buddy. They're all yours. Take 'em home.
Take 'em home and enjoy yourself. Enjoy eating your*

PEANUTS!"