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### Five Years Before Pete Rose

Glen Brown

*College of DuPage*

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## Five Years Before Pete Rose

*Glen Brown*

I bought a box of baseball cards  
at Tessie's candy store  
on Elizabeth Street for two dollars,  
forty packs frosted in glucose  
and a yield of players  
we'd swap like big-league  
managers making trades.

Sometimes two or three Ernie Banks  
cards turned up in one box,  
a bait for any Cubs addict in '58.  
I was the only White Sox fan  
on Elizabeth Street that year,  
a pariah who went to Wrigley Field  
carrying a bag of peanut butter

sandwiches for munching,  
baseball cards for autographs  
and gum for wagering with enemies  
on the game's outcome.  
We'd always arrive just in time  
for batting practice; I'd cheer  
for the challenger in town--

Reds, Dodgers, Phillies,  
it didn't matter--amid jeers.  
I'd bet forty sticks of gum  
against the Cubs each game,  
come home overdosed on sugar,  
my jaws sore from chewing.