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Tryout

Aaron Q. Long

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AARON Q. LONG

Tryout

Suppose it's your first summer in Ohio.

Suppose your older brother is trying out for Little League.

He is standing inside the fence of the field,
waiting in line with the nine-year-olds.

Assume you find your way to the empty lot across the
street.

You know he will be the first player chosen.
You don't care how many fly balls he catches,
stretching out the finger holes of the mitt
you have to share with him.

Assume you find a pick-up game at the lot.

The boys there need another player.

The tallest boy is wearing the shoes you have begged
your mother to buy for you.

Suppose they ask you to play.

You are taller than the other two boys
who have not been chosen yet.

Suppose one of the boys points to you.

Another boy argues with him.
They whisper to each other behind their mitts.

Assume the second boy asks, "Are you a boy or a girl?"

Assume this is happening.

Some boys are laughing.

Do you:

- A. Punch the tallest one in the face and ask, "Have you ever been punched that hard by a girl, asshole?"
- B. Say "I'm a girl," and get picked last.
- C. Panic, maybe even blush a little, and say, "I'm a boy," while you try not to cry.
- D. Pause. Think hard. Say, "I don't know. Are you a boy or a girl?"
- E. Leave. Go find your sister's old bike and pedal home before they notice there are flowers on the seat.