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EDITORS' NOTE

Poet laureate of the Colts

Ogden Nash, who wrote the paean to the Colts that appears on pages 75-81, is a poet, a fanatic of the Baltimore Colts (Baltimore is his football-time home), and a gentleman. After his Colts had humiliated the New York Giants 26-0, he took great pains to minimize the importance of the game to an editor here, a fanatic Giant fan, and dwelt instead on how very interesting the other half of the Sunday TV football twin bill had been. At close quarters, however, there is no mistaking where Nash's heart is. He loves the Colts. "Oh, there's Matte," he says, "the Everything Man. And just *think* about Morrall coming back from all this talk about him being second-rate, and then—well, there's Bold Bald Bad Bobby Boyd." He repeats the appellation carefully, lovingly. "Hell of a man on pickoffs." Although Nash's personal theory about why pro football has become a national preoccupation is unconventional ("Football teams are the best-trained repertory companies in the country—everybody is so well-rehearsed and everybody is perfectly cast"), he spends his Sundays between September and January in happy orthodoxy—glassy-eyed until every last on-screen minute of pro action is done.



OGDEN NASH

The poet's immediate connection with football is almost half a century distant. The last organized ball he played was as a backup quarterback at St. George's School, in Newport, R.I., in 1919. "You can get an idea of how good I was," he says, "from the fact that although we lost The Game 49-0, I didn't get to play a minute of it." Appropriately, the verse he was writing at the time was "quite lugubrious—I was in my Swinburne stage." He did not, in fact, begin writing light verse until 10 years later, in 1929, when he decided that it would be better to be "a good bad poet than a bad good poet." His present poet-box position in professional sport quite satisfies him: "Marianne Moore watches baseball and I watch football." But when football flicks off the tube and winter turns to spring, he harbors strong sentiments in favor of the Orioles and/or the Boston Red Sox—in warmer weather he migrates to Little Boars Head, on the New Hampshire coast. "Just so one or other of them wins," he says. In two of the last three years he has been lucky.

Mr. Nash's verse first appeared in LIFE more than 30 years ago. Since then he has undertaken a number of projects for us, including a description of some colorful baseball types in 1955 and, four years before that, a poem he wrote to celebrate the marriage of his first daughter. From that happy conjunction, three grandchildren have resulted, and there are two more by another daughter. Mr. Nash keeps busy. Last month, his 11th collection of verse, *There's Always Another Windmill*, appeared from Little, Brown. His current project is an appearance with the San Francisco Symphony to narrate Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, for which he wrote some verses. This engagement, he calculates, will keep him out of Baltimore until any reaction to the verse and pictures on the Colts in this issue has died down. "The last thing in the world I want," he says, "is to open the door at 3 o'clock some morning and find a 295-pound Colt standing there on the doorstep angrily wanting to know 'Why wasn't I in your story?' or 'Why did you have to say *that* about me?'"

George P. Hunt
GEORGE P. HUNT,
Managing Editor

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LIFE

My Colts *Verses and Reverses* by *Ogden* *Nash*

Look at Number 53,
Dennis Gaubatz,
that is he,
looming 10 feet tall
or taller
above the Steelers'
signal caller . . .
Since Gaubatz acts like
this on Sunday,
I'll do my
quarterbacking Monday

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