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## Dear Editor Who Sent Me a Tiered Rejection

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*Sean Thomas Dougherty*

## Dear Editor Who Sent Me a Tiered Rejection

Which made me wonder if it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier or the 1<sup>st</sup>, and how good it felt not to be in the 133<sup>rd</sup> row for a change, but really when I got your note it felt more like I was under the bleachers at the night-school basketball game when I was 14, where I was greeted with my first kiss by Katie Dowd, before she walked away and sat with her friends, and drank a bottle of Robitussin, and ended up kissing my best friend before puking under the bleachers in the same spot where we had stood and her buddy Donna and I carried her arm and arm out into the winter night and on towards home. I never kissed her again but even then I knew like this rejection, Dear Editor, not all rejections are the same, and some, well, they are a kind of hope, the way the stars are a kind of hope, so far in the dark there above the railroad tracks and the tenements and a gymnasium, emptying out with the last stragglers and quips and hollers of those years so long ago before we'd ever even fallen—