

Simply One Page-The Dugout

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision motivated by my one page intent. Mike Haddorff 2630

Across the alley from our house on the 1100 block of Remington Street was a vacant lot shaded by two apple trees. That lot became our kingdom as boys. It was where we hammered together crooked treehouses, built signs, and dreamed up new worlds. Between those two apple trees, we started another project, the dugout.

The plan was ambitious: dig deep enough to put a roof on it, cover it with dirt, and create a hidden underground clubhouse. But the truth is, we never made it that far. Every time we dug, we got too tired, too hot, or too distracted. So the dugout remained nothing more than a shallow depression in the ground.

But to us, that shallow pit was magic. With Matchbox cars, we built whole cities, roads winding up dirt banks, homes carved into the side, restaurants from twigs. We played for hours, lost in a miniature world that lived entirely in our imaginations.

As an adult, I realize how often that imagination gets buried under responsibility. Work, deadlines, and the pressure to “be productive” can make wonder feel like a luxury.

But psychologists remind us that imagination isn’t childish, it’s essential for health, creativity, and hope. Albert Einstein once said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world.”

I’ve come to see imagination as a gift. Every great idea, every invention, every act of creativity begins in someone’s mind. And sometimes, the most life-giving thing we can do is let our imaginations roam free again, just like we did in the dugout.

When was the last time you gave yourself permission to play in the dirt of your imagination?