And much as Paulie wants to move from this fire burning before his very eyes, he can't move. As loudly as his head is telling him to get away from this smoldering mess that is the Indians' season, he can't pull his heart out of it - mesmerized inexplicably by watching the season go further and further into the abyss. What is it that makes him want to rationalize that this season is salvageable? He tells us in his latest column.

Attempting to find better uses for my time as this Indians' season fritters away, day by day and game by game, I found myself reading through my latest issue of Esquire. In the current issue (the one with the delicious Megan Fox on the cover), there is an article in which the **terrific prose of Tom Chiarella** describes a scene in the upcoming movie "The Road", the adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's **brilliant post-apocolyptic novel**.

My mind working (unfortunately) as it does, I couldn't help but find myself drifting off back onto the Reservation as Chiarella's introduction captured what I'm feeling right now:

At one point in "The Road", a moment that is never otherwise explained or referenced, the father and the son stare at a dead forest as it burns. The fire leers profanely from one edge of the screen to the other. Dense and hot,

certainly loud, it's the sort of fire from which there is no safe distance. It feels like the two of them should get out of there. From the get-go, the father and son have moved. And yet now they stand there watching the fire, dazed, like two drunks gazing out the window of a Laundromat at a mushroom cloud.

Move, guys. Move.

And as much as I want to move from this fire burning before my very eyes, I can't move. As loudly as my head is telling me to get away from this smoldering mess that is the Indians' season, I can't pull my heart out of it - mesmerized inexplicably by watching the season go further and further into the abyss.

What is it that makes me want to rationalize that this season is salvageable?

Is it the knowledge that the Indians posted a .611 winning percentage last year over the final 72 games, going 44-28 to finish at the .500 mark with nearly the same cast of characters that we see donning the script "I" night after night?

Why do I sit here and rationalize that if the Indians can go 13-6 in their next 19 games before their next day off, that the season will somehow remain in play?

Do I look at the rest of the AL Central and think that, a quarter of the way into the season, 85 wins is all it could take to win the division and we're only a hot streak away from that?

Honestly, I don't know for sure, but I feel more and more like I'm on a post-apocalyptic trip through scorched Earth like the father and son in "The Road" with Chiarella's words (from a magazine that you should really consider if you enjoy superb writing on topics as varied as "The Esquire Bible of Drinking" to a piece by Nate Silver on the death of the American Automobile industry) painting the picture of what this season feels like:

Everything is dead. There is no color left in anything - not the people, not the plants, not the faces of mountains. Ruined, wrecked, and used up- it is our world, consumed at its edges by fire, at its center by rot...Sounds awful, because it goddamned well is. But it's awful, too, as in full of awe. Awful as in you cannot avert your gaze. It's hard not to watch a fire.

Maybe the comparison is a bit of an overstatement in terms of comparing something as small in the grand scheme of things as a baseball season to a "ruined, wrecked, and used up" world...but didn't that blown save by Wood resemble something of a mushroom cloud?

So, why is it that I cannot avert my gaze?

Why is there that little part of me that forces me to watch these games, thinking beyond logic that somehow this team is going to miraculously turn this thing around and convincing me that I want to be there when the turnaround begins? How is it that I am able to somehow block out the fact that the team would need to go 71-51 over the last 122 to hit those 85 wins that it will probably take to win the AL Central. My head tells my heart over and over again that the chances of this team hitting that .581 winning percentage look pretty bleak in terms of overcoming a rotation full of question marks after CP Lee and a bullpen whose complete and utter failure is now complete.

In this landscape of scorched Earth, why am I unable to look away from the fire?

The fruitlessness of the trip now becomes crushing as nothing that the Indians do, or attempt to do, seems to work and usually only causes pain - not unlike the movie adaptation that Chiarella describes:

When they do move, the father and the son progress through a quietly seething dream, a world at its end. When they run from danger, they clank and rustle and seem wetly destined to never get away. When the father grips the boy's mouth to quiet him, it is too rough. Rivers seem to be icy sloughs of poison. Yet they swim. They are a father and son. They carry two bullets. Anytime the man turns his back on the boy or separates from him, it feels - in a way that scary, apocalyptic movies often do - as if everything will end.

So, as we grasp for even the littlest victories, for any tiny detail that offers hope, the question comes flying at us - is this the end...or has the end already happened and we're just plodding along aimlessly in a lost world, reaching for answers when we're the truth is that we may be asking the wrong questions...