In George Orwell's seminal work, "Animal Farm," a contrast is developed between the young optimist horse Boxer and the old cynical donkey Benjamin. Despite numerous setbacks, the powerful young Boxer sees light at the end of the tunnel and uses his mantra, "I will work harder," to continue to work toward the the success of the Farm, while Benjamin has seen this all before and knows the ending. One is turned into glue. The other is right. Guess which one.

FINAL	1	2	3

Indians (2-2)	0	1	0
Tigers (3-1)	0	0	0

W: Porcello (1-0) L: Huff (0-1) S: Valverde (1)

FINAL	1	2	3

Indians (2-3)	0	0	0
Tigers (4-1)	2	0	2

W: Bonderman (1-0) L: Talbot (0-1) S: R. Perry (1)

FINAL	1	2	3
Indians (2-4)	5	0	0

Tigers	**(5-1)**	0	0	0

W: Coke (1-0) L: C. Perez (0-1)

This may hurt a little
This may hurt a little
This may hurt a little
-- Dressy Bessy

1) Preliminaries: The Worst Play in the World

For those so inclined, I actually wrote about this right away on Friday. For those not so inclined, here is the upshot:

David Huff was pitching reasonably well on Friday, especially for being David Huff. He struck out the first two batters he faced, and through 4 innings had only allowed two baserunners on a single by Magglio Ordonez and a walk on a full count to Miguel Cabrera. It's hard to ask for anything more than that, and more to the point, Huff LOOKED good. Put aside statistics or results for a moment: the fact is that Huff had good command and seemed to have a little extra *oomph* on his pitches. There's no way in Pittsburgh I'm going to believe he was humping it up there at 96 as it read on the Zumaya Gun, but it certainly wasn't Finesse Lefty high-80s sort of stuff.

Huff pitched well.

Until the fifth, of course, when he gave up an infield single, a single up the middle, and an 0-2 single to Adam Everett, which really should be impossible at this point. You can't let Adam Everett get a hit with a guy in scoring position. That's just bad.

Anyway, Austin Jackson beat out ANOTHER infield hit, and Huff now found himself protecting a one-run lead with one out and the bases loaded. He got Johnny Damon to pop out by throwing him four straight strikes: Huff wasn't going to nibble, and for this I credit him. Then with the dangerous Ordonez at the plate, Huff threw a quality 2-0 pitch that Ordonez grounded with authority to third.

The ball caught Jhonny Peralta in between the backhand and forehand: it's the kind of play a shortstop has time to get around on that a third baseman does not. Yes, he should have fielded the ball cleanly, but it wasn't like he fielded it with his face or anything. He just didn't catch it.

Anyway, with the ball rolling toward the mound, Peralta rushed WAY too much (Magglio Ordonez' days of being speedy have long since passed), grabbed the ball, and unleashed a terrible throw to the infield dirt near Andy Marte's feet. Yeah, it was a bad throw. From the description of the play, you might think it sailed into right field or missed by a mile, but really, it was on-line, just short, low, and bad. Marte, a converted third baseman, did not catch the ball.

He did not stop the ball, either.

Worse yet, he did not even PURSUE the ball.

I cannot tell you what Andy Marte's thought process here was. Perhaps he thought someone was backing him up. Perhaps he is part Komodo Dragon and, as a cold-blooded creature, was sluggish in the Detroit cold. Perhaps he wondered about the apparent paradox that a sphere maximizes the volume you get from a given surface area, but minimzes the surface area you get from a given volume. I can't tell you this. All I know is, there is almost no way for even the speedy Austin Jackson to score from first base on an error by the third baseman without plate

tectonics being involved unless someone simply does not move on the play.

Marte simply did not move on the play.

It should be noted that neither Luis Valbuena nor Shin-Soo Choo beat Marte to the ball. Mike Redmond has an excuse in that with a runner on third, he has to stay home, and also, Mike Redmond is glacial.

Note that you may blame this play for the loss (it resulted in 3 runs and we lost by 3), but really now: our offense did very little in the late innings and our bullpen is not guaranteed to hold the opponent scoreless.

2) In defense

The scathing epithets hurled toward Peralta after the play seem misguided at best. The Indians have made one error this season. Sure, it was The Worst Play in the World, but he hasn't played poor defense overall. But more to the point, Peralta leads the team in OPS with .810, leads the team in homers (with 1, but still), has drawn a walk in 5 of his 6 games, fouled off five two-strike pitches before Jeremy Bonderman unleashed a run-scoring wild pitch, is the only Indian to reach base in every game, has a stolen base, and generally provides value to the team. Do I wish he accomplished more? Sure. He's hitting .200, which is bad. He could be a better third baseman. Of all the reasons this team is under .500, though, Jhonny Peralta isn't close to the top.

3) Anatomy of a Crushed Soul: Decision Point One

Jake Westbrook had a very tough first outing, pumping out 10 Witt Points in just 4+ innings of work ("The Plus means it's not working!"). His second start got off to a significantly better beginning: sure, he walked two guys in the first inning (including the leadoff hitter on FOUR PITCHES), but he settled down significantly with a 1-2-3 second and a pair of swinging Ks in the third. Signs of trouble started after that, though, when only a fine throw by Shin-Soo Choo and an excellent tag by Tofu Lou Marson prevented two singles and a walk from producing a

run. In the 4th, Westbrook hit Ramon Santiago and Gerald Laird, both lousy hitters, on consecutive first pitches. And in the fifth, Westbrook finally fell off the tightrope by allowing three singles to produce a run, although he did strike out the last two hitters swinging.

It is this last fact, combined with Jhonny Peralta's two-run jack to push the lead to 7-1, that likely provided the impetus to allow Westbrook to come out for the sixth. Up at 90 pitches, Westbrook may not have been fatigued or anything, but look: the man hit two execrable hitters back-to-back, and his stuff was starting to be hit. He needed 21 pitches to get out of the 5th. Another factor may have been that the bottom of the order was coming up. But after Westbrook allowed a single to Santiago and struck out Laird, he gave up a single to Scott Sizemore, another to Austin Jackson, and got Don Kelly to fly out to left. That's 103 pitches.

Letting him pitch to Ordonez isn't a terrible decision, but part of managing a guy coming off UCL replacement is to try to recognize the signs of losing command. Here's a sign: hitting Ramon Santiago and Gerald Laird on consecutive pitches. Here's another: giving up back-to-back singles to rookies, then elevating a pitch some Some Guy Name Don Kelly. I may be overly cautious, but I just don't trust Westbrook's command until he gets at least 5 starts under his belt (June is more likely).

Anyway, Ordonez singled in two runs and now it's 7-3. Westbrook posted five more Witt Points (3 BB, 2 HBP) in 5 2/3 IP.

4) Anatomy of a Crushed Soul: Failure by Suck

Jensen Lewis has been a real boon to this point: in three scoreless outings, he had struck out 5 hitters in 3 2/3 innings, walked one hitter, and given up ZERO HITS. Look, say what you want about Jensen Lewis, but that's OUTSTANDING. He "unintentionally intentionally" walked Miguel Cabrera before getting Carlos Guillen to pop out to end the 6th. In the 7th, he got a groundout, a single, and a foulout to get to 2 outs and a man on first. He got two quick strikes on Sizemore.

And then he turned into a leaking package of rotten fish meal.

Sizemore laced a pitch over the plate for an RBI double. Then he had Jackson down 1-2 before walking him on three straight balls. And because he'd sucked a raw egg, Manny Acta called in Aaron Laffey to face the lefty Ryan Raburn.

5) Anatomy of a Crushed Soul: Failure by Suck II

Laffey came in firing … bullshit. He walked Raburn on five pitches. Raburn did not even bring a bat to the plate.

6) Anatomy of a Crushed Soul: Decision Point Two

Joe Smiff came in and got Magglio Ordonez to fly out to center. That's fine. It's hard to argue with the choice of Smiff, who is tough on righties, but it's also hard to argue that going to the well once is sufficient, seeing as how Smiff walked THREE guys in his last start.

On the other hand, the next three hitters to start the 8th are Miguel Cabrera, Carlos Guillen (a switch-hitter who has been marginally better against lefties over the past three years), and Brandon Inge. Manny Acta called in Raffy Perez to start the inning.

Now, Perez, was good in his first outing as well. His command looks a lot better. He gave up three straight singles, but they were all basically seeing-eye grounders. In fact, Perez has a preposterous .714 BABIP and a ridiculous GB% of 87%. A lot of his elevated WHIP is simple bad luck. Anyway, he gave up a run on a double play (good), but lost the next two hitters with two MORE ground ball singles. Out goes Raffy, in comes Chris, Chris retires Jackson, 8-6 after 8.

7) Anatomy of a Crushed Soul: Decision Point Three

Chris Perez has been a fine closer. He has saved each of the team's two victories and has good command of his slider. Of his fastball, no, but slider, yes.

C-Pez got Raburn to ground out before giving up a single to Ordonez. He walked Cabrera after having him 1-2, and gave up a run-scoring double to Guillen on a 1-0 pitch. At this point, he has started four straight hitters with a first-pitch ball and thrown 19 pitches. Thankfully, Inge grounded out on the first pitch and there are two outs. 20 pitches.

At this point, C-Pez clearly runs out of gas. His five pitches to Santiago have varying degree of suck involved, flying out and missing the zone by a significant amount. He is missing the plate and walks the bases loaded. He is gassed. 25 pitches.

Left-hander Johnny Damon comes in to pinch-hit. You essentially have two choices at this point:

a) Leave C-Pez in to face a patient veteran left-hander
b) Bring in Tony Sipp, who has an incredible 5 Witt Points (3 BB, 1 HBP, 1 WP) in 2 1/3 IP

Neither decision is good. However, I will opine thusly:

i) Tony Sipp MIGHT fail because he MIGHT exhibit poor command
ii) C-Pez WILL fail because he TOTALLY RAN OUT OF GAS

C-Pez failed. He walked Damon on four pitches to tie the game. His next pitch was a ball … so much so that it was actually a wild pitch and Guillen scored the winning run. At this point, C-Pez was loaded into a van to be taken to the veterinarian, but the van inexplicably was marked as being for the glue factory. Fortunately, Acta explained that the vet's van had broken down, and he was simply borrowing one from the glue manufacturer. Honest. He was then heard to bleat, "Four legs good, two legs better!" while the rest of the staff drank whiskey and smoked cigars.

8) Welcome to the club!

Mitch Talbot's debut was not stellar. I take encouragement from the fact that he retired his last 8 hitters in a row. Now, if you'll excuse me, the van is here to pick me up.

9) Pronk smash!

Travis Hafner hit his first home run of the season off Rick Porcello Friday. The blast was listed at 412 feet, so this was no Pesky Pole kind of cheapie.

Hafner now has hits in 5 of his 6 games and went 4-for-10 for the weekend series. He also drove in a run in each of the Detroit games.

The bad news, of course, is that the homer is his only extra-base hit and he's slugging .391. But hey.

10) Smash-Soo Choo!

What a disappointing start for Mr. Choo, of whom great things were expected this season after such a breakout campaign in 2009. It's early, and worrying is unwarranted. It's six games, people.

Still, it was nice to see Choo hit not just a homer, but an opposite field shot. To point out how small the samples are at this point in the season, Choo's home run raised his SLG by 175 points.

11) Nice hose!

I mentioned this above, but with two outs and runners on first and second in the bottom of the third Sunday, Miguel Cabrera lined a single to right, and Choo came up throwing, putting a nice throw on target to gun down Don Kelly at the plate for the final out of the inning.

I should say, though, that this was not all Choo: Marson made a sparkling play to get the ball and whirl into position to make the tag. Well done.

12) Muy (Val)buena!

With the bases loaded in the first inning off Justin Verlander, Travis Hafner lifted a ball to left that I thought had a chance to get out. It didn't, although it did score Asdrubal Cabrera from first. By the way, I want to point out that not only did Cabrera score, but Mike Brantley (who had singled) and Choo (who had walked) BOTH advanced on the play. We have more speed than we've had in a while.

Anyway, after Peralta K'd and Matt LaPorta drew a walk, Luis Valbuena took a 2-1 pitch from Verlander right down the line for a 341-foot grand slam to stake the Indians to a 5-0 lead. Hafner's ball may have travelled further, but Valbuena is now second on the team with 4 RBI. He is also second on the team with an .806 OPS.

13) Continuing theme

Jamey Wright pitched again.