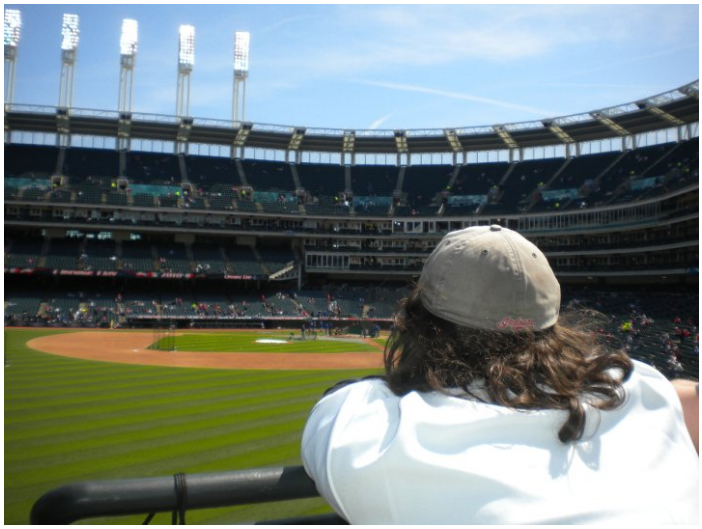

With the Indians playing around .500 ball since May, fear and doubt are starting to creep in to almost everybody's mind. The Indians gave themselves the luxury of playing .500 by having an 18-8 April and giving themselves a reasonable shot at having four months of mediocrity lead to 86 wins. As I said in last week's VftP about perspective, baseball is a long grind. There are 162 games to complete.

It isn't time to run for the life jackets and the row boats, but a slight sense of panic is setting in. For some, the panic is far more severe than others. While the national media starts writing up their "I told you so" articles about the Indians and the fairweather fans' second thoughts about the season begin to take over their sense of optimism, overreactions are running rampant. Step away from the ledge everyone.

Is the Indians stretch of middling, sometimes substandard play in the back of my mind? Of course it is. Why wouldn't it be? We've been ****-teased too many times in this town to have it be otherwise. But, I don't let it consume me. I'd rather take it in stride and eat the burger. Or, in other words, there's no reason to let a bump in the road ruin something entirely. Every road has a bump, even the most freshly-paved one.

I get that a slump is a surprise for us this year. With how well things began, it looked like the road to the playoffs would be paved with yellow bricks and lined with waving, screaming fans. Consider that we're actually at the point where a stretch like this pisses us off. Last year, weeks

like this past one would be the norm, the expected outcome from the Indians. This year, it's a shock. That tells you how far we've come.

This is not the same team we saw in April and very early May. Personnel-wise, it might be damn close. But, the team that was 30-15 on May 23 has disappeared. Josh Tomlin and Justin Masterson look human. The defense has been porous (#FreeCordPhelps). Clutch two-out base hits are harder to come by and the “different hero every night” theory seems to have gone by the wayside for the time being.

Anybody know what this is called? Give up? I’ll tell you. This is called baseball. It is a game of streaks. A game of ebbs and flows. A game of Mount Everests and Death Valleys. A game of Five Guys hamburgers and processed, frozen grocery store patties. A game of a fresh pie from your favorite Little Italy pizzeria and a hastily-thrown together, unauthentically topped pizza from a chain. A game of...nevermind, you get the idea.

Teams go through struggles. No team is immune to this. The 2008 Philadelphia Phillies’ longest losing streak was six games. The 2009 New York Yankees longest losing streak was five games. The 2010 San Francisco Giants longest losing streak was seven games. The ’10 Giants also had two entire months where they played below .500 and a month that finished exactly .500.

Since the first game of the Boston series, the Indians are 3-7. They have allowed 74 runs while scoring 37. Quite frankly, they were due for a stretch like this. Not because they’re a bad baseball team, but because it’s the nature of the game of baseball. The trick to being a good, or great, baseball team is to prevent long losing streaks. Win a bulk of the series that you play. To date, the Indians have done that. They have found ways to win more games that they shouldn’t than give winnable games away.

Much has been made of a couple of the team’s more pressing issues. Here’s the View from the Porch on these subjects.