

Birth and Death of a Concrete Icon

by Matt DeVirgiliis

Homer relaxes in his tan, faded recliner, remote in hand, and watches death unfold on his television.

On the TV, an announcer talks about the memories created in the dilapidated ballpark — Veterans Stadium — while images of those events flash across the screen. “Ten seconds until the park implodes.”

“Ten.”

“Nine.”

Shots of the interior and exterior fade in and out.

“Eight.”

“Seven.”

“Six.”

Homer closes his eyes and remembers opening day.

Saturday, April 10th, 1971. A perfect day for a game. Homer and his son cheered with fifty thousand other Fightin' Phils fans.

“Five.”

October baseball in 1980. Mike and team went all the way — World Champions. Homer watched from the 700 level.

“Four.”

Homer and his wife attended the 1983 World Series. Second place.

“Three.”

Homer took his grandson to his first game. Seven years old and surrounded by chants, peanuts, and the Phanatic.

“Two.”

Homer watched the '93 series from the comfort of his new tan recliner. Underdogs to the core, they painted their helmets with pine tar and ripped their shirts off in victory. Second place again.

“One.”

Homer leans forward in his recliner and stares at the screen as the Phanatic presses the trigger. Like a slinky, it falls to Earth with a groan. A shot from atop the mezzanine level tracks the debris cloud as it approaches, closer and closer, until it goes black.

Homer sits back again, looks at a picture of his family, and closes his wet eyes.

