

A coming of age autobiography about growing up in 60's and 70's Baltimore. Memories are punctuated with baseball, music, businesses frequented, carnivals, road trips, clothing, hair, games, and the funny personalities of friends and neighbors.

When All Was Well In Wellwood

By Larry Levy

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WHEN ALL
WAS
WELL
IN
WELLWOOD

The background of the poster is a collage of images. At the top left, a baseball is suspended in the air. In the upper right, a young man in a white baseball uniform and red cap is captured in a dynamic pose, as if about to throw a ball. In the lower right, a young woman with long blonde hair is crouching on a wooden floor, talking on a white mobile phone. On the left side, a large, partially eaten sandwich with green filling is visible. The overall scene is set on a wooden floor, possibly a gymnasium or a school hallway.

LARRY LEVY

A red and white electronic device, possibly a portable CD player or a small stereo system, is shown in the bottom right corner of the poster. It has a circular display and several buttons.

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Contents

The Early Years.....	13
6707 Chokeberry Road.....	14
Burned Beginnings.....	15
Hobby Horse Hall.....	16
An Early Life in Black and White.....	17
A Nice Thing.....	19
Wellwood Elementary School.....	21
The Pied Piper of Wellwood.....	23
Sealtest.....	24
Wait a Minute!.....	25
A Short Strange Trip.....	26
Gal Pal.....	27
Retribution.....	28
Wagner's Pharmacy.....	29
Baseball Cards.....	30
The Balladeers.....	31
Mickey.....	32
First Pitch.....	33
Undiagnosed Fear of Clowns.....	34
Hopscotch, Anyone?.....	35
Greek Dodge.....	36
Supermarket Sweep.....	37
The Balloon Ascension.....	38
Silber's.....	39
In the Eyes of the Beholder.....	40
The Nehru Jacket.....	41
The Chosen People.....	42
Romeo and Juliet, Sort of.....	43
Our Better Angels.....	44
Neighborly Revenge.....	46
The Houses of Cool.....	47
The Other Half.....	49
Cereal Mom.....	50
The Whip.....	51
The Super Ball.....	52
Orange Greed.....	54

Buck Teeth	55
Wildwood.....	56
Transitions	57
That and 25 Cents	58
Homesickness	59
Language Skills.....	60
The Imaginary Line.....	61
The Baseball Kids and the Shrew	62
Boys Will Be Boys.....	64
An Incident Involving Birds	66
O, Brother!	67
Nature Abhors a Vacuum Cleaner	68
You're Old Friend, Simon Harris	69
Two Hands Ace	70
The Barber of Pikesville	71
Everything Sounds Better in Stereo	72
Paradise on Old Court Road.....	74
Thumbs Up	76
Fountain of Youth	78
Thanks, man!	79
Pony Boy	81
Gateway Drug	83
A New Philosophy	84
Baltimore Trick and Novelty.....	86
The Eldorado Bar.....	87
The Penny Arcade	88
The Beep Line.....	89
The Plaza	90
Wallpaper	92
Swimmingly.....	93
Bombs Away	94
Drum Beats of War	96
Champagne Sparkle	97
The Presence of Soul	98
Ahoy, Landlubbers!.....	99
The Spring of My Discontent.....	100
Sunny's	101
As If	102
The T-Shaped Amulet	103

When All Was Well In Wellwood

Almost All the Way.....	105
The Marriottsville Carnival	106
Mono	108
The Next Level.....	109
Innocence is Ephemeral.....	110
Watkins Glen	112
Sweet Cider	114
“It’s Aite”	116
My Awakening.....	118
The Last Day	119
Someone I Used to Be	122

Our Better Angels

There was Rocky, Lance, Dolly, Buffy,
Ruby, Muttie, Wally, Peter,
Rags (who my sister liked to call Lad),
And a whole host of other canines
That remained indoors and never sought the spotlight.

But for many families in our neighborhood,
A dog was the four-legged version of another child.
They often acquired cult status, had strong personalities,
And would roam freely throughout Wellwood without fear.

Lance was a collie who chased airplanes in his free time.
Dolly loved ice cream and was a friend to all.
Ruby was shy and standoffish.
Buffy was neurotic and a bit snippy.
Muttie lived in a hall closet and growled when you hung up your coat.
Rags was propagator in chief: for him every day was hump day,
And Wally couldn't be bothered with the canine social scene.

Peter was a black Dachshund
And proof that God had a sense of humor.
Engineered so that nothing underneath
Was chafed when running along concrete,
Pedro, (as he was often called by my neighbor's Spanish maid),
Drank beer from his ceramic bowl and watched football every Sunday.
A hedonist to the very end, Peter was a role model to us all.

And then there was Rocky. Our Rocky. Crazy Rocky.
My sister referred to the half-mad mutt, as "The Wise One".
Hardly an example of self-awareness and calm,
Rocky bit often and bit many, sometimes just for kicks.

When All Was Well In Wellwood

He was never able to overcome the pepper spray
That a petrified mailman shot into his eyes.

Rocky was an outlier in an otherwise peaceful neighborhood,
A rebel without a cause.

Nature Abhors a Vacuum Cleaner

I despised raking leaves.
“Let them eat Mulch,”
I said to grass and father alike –
Father who held over me the threat of no allowance.

Bamboo shoots blew down on us
From our next-door neighbor’s overgrown Zen Garden
That was the bane of my father’s existence.

I was certain my dad spent his quiet hours
Reading fantasy books like “The Hills Are Alive Sans Leaves”
Or, “How to Get Your Child Interested in Raking”
That gave examples of kids who refused to do yard work.

His worship of grass was quite different
From the hippie’s love of the green stuff
I had been reading about with newfound interest.

What mattered most to me and my simple way of thinking
Was how to get out of something I didn’t want to do.
The removal of the fallen from God’s lazy earth
Was not my idea of fun.

Like Sisyphus, it was an exercise in futility --
Trying to stop running bamboo
That doubled in size every year.

Note to self: Never use a Hoover to do a rake’s job.

Ahoy, Landlubbers!

Landlubbers were low-riding, hip-hugging dungarees
That fit snug against the thighs and calves
Then fanned out into a giant, bell bottom.

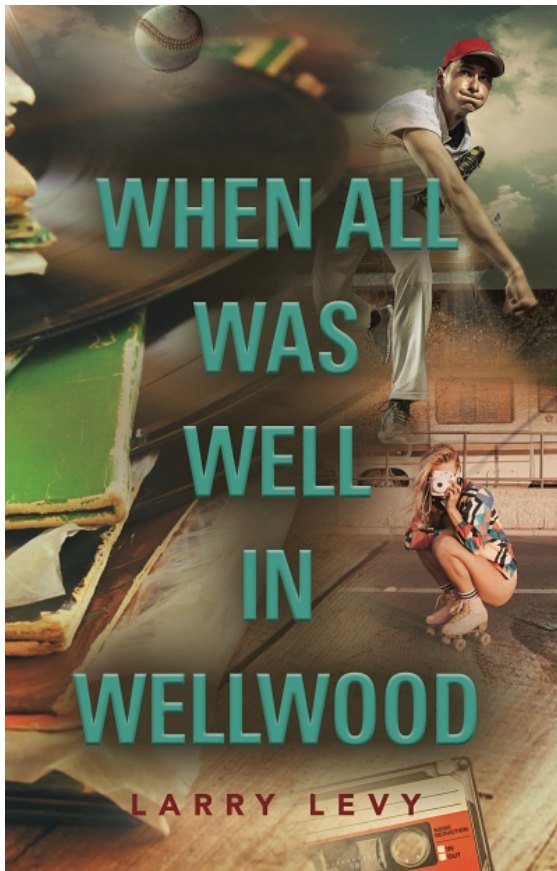
We called them, 'Elephant Bells' due to their extreme size
And because they completely covered your shoes.
No hippie was complete without a pair of Landlubber jeans.

I wore mine every day
Along with a collared Tee and open flannel shirt.
That was the look back in 1972.

A pair of my father's black army boots
Rounded out my radical ensemble,
And like Mr. Natural, I was truckin' in style.

An unintended consequence of wearing enormous bells
Was treading on the bottom of the pant legs
Causing the jeans to tear up to the back of the knee.

My mom offered to sew the damaged area.
But I rebuffed her generous offer on several occasions.
Instead, I embraced my own tattered fashion statement.



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