



Going the Distance: A Novel

Michael Joyce

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His major league baseball dreams dashed, a former pitcher returns home to make a life or death family decision.

Going the Distance is a baseball novel with a difference; a multilayered love story, a celebration of both America's game and the New York landscape. John "Jack" Flynn was a major league pitcher with all-star promise. But on the day of the 1979 All-Star game, he finds himself back in the North Country of New York where he was born, his career cut short by an injury, no recollection as to how he came to be back there with a beautiful woman he doesn't recognize beside him in the passenger seat of his car. The mystery of this passenger is but the first of many mysteries in this richly poetic, deeply moving, and sometimes comic novel.

Flynn faces losses much greater than the end of an athletic career. In a journey both to recover his past and to find a place and time to begin life anew, he faces perhaps the most difficult decision a human being must make. In the process he garners support from a band of magical characters: a mystical girl who tells fortunes with baseball cards; a onetime "bird dog" baseball scout who dresses in a hazmat body suit to avoid polluting himself with human contact; a former teammate, a homerun hitter and juju man who comes to the rescue from the sky; and, most of all, that woman beside Flynn who teaches him how to love again, or perhaps for the first time.

"I read it in two huge gulps, which should tell you something. I think it's terrific, moves, moves me, and I love it! Flynn and Emma are marvelously there, and everyone comes alive as well. I'm jealous. Poets can do lots of things, but not this!" — Joel Oppenheimer, author of *The Wrong Season*

"A fever dream about how the past, one's homeland, and the national pastime can beguile and bewitch the best of us." — Tim Wendel, author of *Castro's Curveball and Summer of '68: The Season That Changed Baseball—and America—Forever*

Michael Joyce is Professor of English and Media Studies at Vassar College. He is the author of many books, including *Disappearance*, *Liam's Going: A Novel*, and *Moral Tales and Meditations: Technological Parables and Refractions*, also published by SUNY Press. He lives along the Hudson River near Poughkeepsie, New York.

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