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Thank God for Ozzie Smith

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Thank God for Ozzie Smith

When Dad chastised my brother & me for watching TV on those gorgeous summer Saturdays, I couldn’t disagree, but baseball beckoned and any chance to watch our Tigers or This Week in Baseball was too much to pass up. It added up, those hours of Willie Stargell homers, Pete Rose dives, Nolan Ryan no-hitters, and Ozzie Smith back flips. It filled our mental record, and it paid off.

When my two-year-old son ran too hastily to the top of the stairs and tumbled head-first, I laid out like Ozzie—a dive so true I paused horizontal to the floor just long enough to realize I was horizontal to the floor with outstretched arms, and I caught his right ankle and held my grasp.

Ozzie, at that point, would pop to his feet & zip a bullet to first or flip a popcorn kernel into the mouth of the second baseman’s glove for a double play, but I pulled in my catch, held this bawling boy in the acreage of my palm, rubbed his head, and muttered love, love, love.

The inning over, I set him down to toddle off with tentative steps, and my heart & soul did a standing back flip in celebration of the golden magic of perfect movement, a thank you to grace.

—Mitchell Nobis
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