

Throwing A Curve

Coming home from Roy's team picture, we stop to show off the brand-new uniform – Blue Jays stenciled on the front, stockings, the works. Out of mischief or shyness he's at the edge of the room as you sit in your chair slowly dying, balder than me for once in your life, shedding more than any of your cats has done.

Time to break out one of Uncle Perry's hats, a Stetson like the one he wore when watching me playing with Donnie, graduation trip, back East, so long ago. Just a game of catch, early June, flowers blooming in a cool Boston summer. I'd never pitched, an outfielder by nature, on the edge of things, when Donnie asked, could I show him. Its sweet break surprised

us both. Perry smiled, a moment of approval that's stuck with me these twenty-five years. Funny how tossing a ball to someone else can mean so much, a warm-up exercise kids want to get over with so they can hit, be the runner, play third base. You tried it once, said I threw too hard, shook your hand and headed back indoors. Work often kept

you from my games, trying to make it up in other ways, collecting stamps, reading Sherlock Holmes, watching Jo-Jo White play ball, ways of being together I've passed along to Roy – who's pirouetting now to show us how the uniform looks all round. Perry gone long ago, not long after watching us play, Donnie gone too – car accident, you said.

Just a game of catch, to share or not to share, cousins throwing on the fringe of a garden, someone older looking on, an ordinary curve surprising them by its sudden change in path, spinning into a glove or dropping on the lawn, making its own arc from hand to hand, waving goodbye.

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