

Lou Ventura

SEAMS

It is the July after his operation,
the summer after my first glove.
We are in the basement

swinging a give-a-way from Geneva's Shuron
Park, hopefully inscribed for the forgotten
Willie Brown.

But soon we move our play outdoors,
where hands that fashion works of wood
will teach me to practice

his other art, for my glove is still
too new, to delay a game of catch for lessons
in long odds and alchemy.

The line drive sent to my glove-side
I misjudge, deflect and chase. A fly
he manufactures,

lost in a haze of high sky,
smacks me in the forehead, square.
Rub? I don't dare.

Suddenly, he removes his shirt, and reveals his scar,
the back of his neck . . . under his arm . . . up his chest,
like the stitches on a baseball.

Later, on the couch, I hold our baseball; I finger
its seams; I fall asleep beside my Dad,
and try like hell

to feel that seam that runs the length
of his rhythmic beating and breathing,
his ticking and tocking.

Now when a west coast game is past the ninth
(oh the mercy of a game without a clock)
I, alone on the couch,

the entire house sleeping, except for me
and the TV, think of that inevitability
that went unspoken

but not unseen, taking the shape of bare chested
hugs along those seams that sealed and
separated him and me.