

Elegy For A Minor League Relief Pitcher

by C.I. Marshall

William K. Tomlinson, American baseball player

In the summer of 70,' they lived in the tiny town of Talent,
her walking over to a trailer to check out books, hitchhiking

to Ashland to learn from the theatre people; the very ones
who helped her find her way. Her cowboy boots clomped

on the bleachers past player's wives with perfect smiles
outlined in red. She saw their hands rise through field dust

showing off red fingernails, sparks of diamonds. Sitting
above them, her hair soothed by the lapping of the wind.

Her eyes lined in navy with lips grounded on grandmother's
rhinestone-studded holder. Neither of them knew it would

be the last time he took the field, stepped on the pitcher's mound,
stamped his cleats on earth dank with chew. Back in the Bay Area,

he bought houses to fix up then sell and threw batting practice
for Reggie Jackson. Looking back, she runs the film of that day

they met. She was hitchhiking to class when a burgundy Triumph
pulled over and she slid in the seat, her leather mini skirt inched up

her thighs. She cooked him dinner, listened to him tell how he was
going to make it to the majors, become his idol, Sandy Koufax.

She didn't know much about men or about baseball but when
he fell asleep on the couch she drew his likeness in pencil. Never
imagining years later, it would be the only record; her only
pathway towards him.