

Elegy for Uncle Bill  
by Tiff Holland

In some theories of time,  
everything is happening at once, your  
birth and death and all your lovemaking.  
In one corner of the curved universe you're  
playing catch with your brother  
in the backyard, wearing  
the shorts and matching ball caps  
from the photo I keep on a shelf  
beside the kitchen window.

The collie dog from the same picture  
is running between you, barking,  
and your mitt is new, not yet  
shaped to your palm and smells  
of the oil your father is teaching you to rub into it,  
as he sits drinking beer and eating peanuts  
listening to the Indians game.

Or maybe it's 1948, the last year  
Cleveland won the Series, and  
you know all the players, their batting  
averages and ERAs. You pretend  
to be Lou Boudreaux  
as you run the imaginary baseline  
through the tall grass, rounding past  
your valedictory speech at second.  
There's a run-down on the third base line:

you run back and forth between  
your children and grandchildren  
before sliding into home to land  
in your backyard with your brother,  
the ball curving between you,  
spinning in its arc.