

## THE OUTFIELDER'S GIRLFRIEND

by William Meisner

He says it's all a game, but I know better.

He says it's all sports page and headlines and statistics.  
He spends days calculating launch angle,  
how many seconds it takes  
to get under a fly ball, timing his leap into the sky.  
But there is no calculation, no science to our love.  
I know what matters most, and

what matters most is the early innings:  
eating breakfast with him in a green kitchen,  
the rows of cereal boxes and canned goods  
watching us from the bleachers of the cupboard shelves.  
It's the extra innings in the evening  
when we lie on a blanket in the back yard, staring at the stars  
we try to grasp but can't quite reach.  
It's the words we say  
and the words we don't say. It's my throws toward home  
when I ask him questions he tries to answer, but  
can't quite.

Though he doesn't know it, I'm the one who centers him.  
And no matter how high he leaps, or how far he falls,  
I'm the one who always  
catches him just before he hits the hard ground.