

The Connection

By Erika Higgins Ross

Her father is a patient teacher—
inning by inning with pencil and graph paper
he shows her how to keep score
with slashes and dashes and
Ks in eraser-smudged boxes.

Her father is a gentle man
who loves literature and opera.
Mahler and Dostoyevsky in the living room
baseball in the basement.
It's the only sport he'll watch.

Their thirteen-inch television
with tinfoil rabbit ears
is black and white so she
doesn't know uniforms make a rainbow—
red orange yellow Astros green As blue Expos.

She inherits her father's team and muted pinstripes—
staid businessmen amidst the flash
her father calls them "a class act"
and lets her stay up way too late
to cheer them on in '78.

She doesn't know that's the closest they'll get.
She grows to love music and books
but not the right ones.
The word *cleave* means to separate *and* to bind.
Life with her father is both.

Tearing away from his judgement.
Coming together when pitchers and catchers report.
They watch on her large flatscreen now.
Rainbow reflected in his glasses.
Sandy dirt and green sod their common ground.