

Bottom of the Ninth

by Kathryn Kirkpatrick

Hot blue seat sticking to my thighs
watching those young men who look older than they are
running and hugging and hitting and catching
and the sun feels so good doesn't it?
it does, winter broke finally under the pressure
of a million little hearts beating and begging
to feel all together again

And here I am surrounded by bodies and noise
and boy does it feel good
sweating together and watching and
leaning forward elbows on knees
the woman to my right is southern and polite and
the father behind me loves his daughter and
I look at my husband who has gotten me another drink
and he's yelling, yelling, smile on his face
cupping his hands around his mouth
and I just love to see that

So many pairs of hands around so many mouths
and so many voices projected forward and inward
towards the hot bright center and those bright young men
I hope they know we're proud and
I hope their mothers are watching and their fathers are kind and
I wonder if they know how much they mean

The man in front of us is turning and laughing
cracking a joke to nobody and everybody
and we all laugh too
because doesn't it feel swell to be warm together in one big body

God bless America and the way she yearns to become something
we can all be proud of
I wish her the best of luck
I jump to my feet and my ice cream spills
I'm screaming we're screaming
and I look out at the boys and again feel pride
because they've all worked so hard and they all worked together
and the swell of love inside me grows ever so big and comes out my eyes
and I want to cry out and remind us all that nothing is trivial