

Heading for Home

by Natalie E.S.Schank

At 14 I played my final game
and didn't know it until
my cleats hung stagnant in the garage
all the next summer
I don't remember my final pitch, the last out
I only remember my father and I
raking the field under a stitch-red sunset
my heart by the strings, must've been dragging behind me
kicking up dust, kicking up memories

At 17 I found myself
this time in the big leagues
wiping green seats hotter than a tin roof
the same stitch of sun on my neck
they don't let me rake the field there
even though it's something I know
maybe it's still missing
but I have back what I needed the most

If you've never heard,
an empty stadium echoes like a drum,
and there are other things
they don't tell you about love
that you cannot out run
your heart
even when it's breaking
it will still beat you
down the line

So I have found
that it is best to turn around,
let yourself be caught
by it, in it, for
the love of the game alone
after all
there are infinite ways
to make it home

