

the one

by Dan Sicoli

so we're nursing a couple as the
yanks and sox battle when
during a commercial
clam joe invites us barflies to catch his
second place little league team he
coaches on tuesday nights and saturdays

joe has always been good with kids
having been a big brother

he gives 'em all a chance
even if a kid seems to be out there
to fulfill a frustrated
parent's lost dreams of glory

like the tall gangling pitcher
who air-mails a fastball over the ump's
head at least once an inning

or the wired second baseman
who keeps tripping over the bag

and the outfielder who acts high
or worse yet, completely lost

then there's that one player
like franny casaro, the butcher's son
he's short but guards first base
like it's his weekly allowance
and swings birch with fury
stolen from an offended god

he's got drive skill hunger anger moxie
—all the makings

once i saw him beamed in the elbow
made me grimace
another player might have ran off bawling
he shrugged it off and took his base
the next inning he caught a line drive, seamlessly
tagging the base runner for a solo double play

sure the kid may never make the bigs
but he's the rare breed coaches love
and the stands clap and cheer for
even in a sudden downpour
or baking unprotected in the sun
risking skin cancer
simply to witness the poetics of his art