

The Game (for Daddy)

by James B. Goode

We got ready early
 assembling our glass bottle RCs,
 packs of Premium saltine crackers,
 and Blue Horse notebook paper
 with the stub of a pencil
 left over from some sweaty homework assignment
 my job was to scratch out the roster
 leaving room for field goals and foul shots
 and space for the possibilities
 of five fouls above each name
 reception was never good in the coal camp
 I held the white wire oval antenna with one hand,
 my body a liquid conduit bringing in the radio waves
 while the other shuffled
 RC, crackers, and the pencil on the paper
 recording every moment
 like it was as important as it was
 four ears cocked toward the luminous radio dial
 waiting,
 listening to the ticking toward the verdict
 heats thumping like pheasant wings in our chests
 sweat breaking out on our foreheads
 from the coal stove in the middle of our court
 and the game
 which most always came down to
 the last second
 the last shot
 the final moment
 flying past us
 like a freight train
 passing a hobo.