

## Ars Poetica Playing Catch with Fielding Dawson in Concord Township NC

Joseph Bathanti

Wearing a royal blue Costa Rica cap  
a *yigüirro*, the national bird  
emblazoned at its crest  
and his *Max's Kansas City* jersey  
he's not pitched in three decades  
But as we warm up, it returns  
as it always does  
foretold  
in the groove good stuff today  
He throws the way he writes  
sneaky fast  
plenty of junk  
screw fork ball knuckler  
off-speed – a way with the seams / away with the *seems*  
grip of an ace  
spin  
that leaves batters mystified  
the Olson wind-up, brash  
in a humble way (Franz Kline)  
no big words,  
yet an acolyte of fundamentals intuition  
shaking off his catcher /  
cleated kick off the rubber / scraping  
earth in the back-bend  
as he comes in with it  
cocky yes look at the smile (those teeth)  
a regular guy (Kirkwood, MO)  
charges the bunt  
covers the bag  
when the first baseman breaks  
to the hole  
each sentence  
down to the syllable  
the entire page  
his hand gliding over the face of it  
*composition by field* / composition  
by Fielding meta  
clipped style (film  
noir) paratactic  
minimal  
fragments  
rhetorical  
a game of inches /  
rhythm, trope

his own grammar  
like Hubbell Feller,  
Dean John Fante  
Yankees fan / the way he said DiMaggio  
soft in the iamb /  
beat the awe in it  
slant / rhyme / *formaggio* /  
the glove receiving the ball /  
the one sound a feat  
strophe  
He wrote all day / his hands had ken, knew what to do  
Holy Week new leaves distracted  
afternoon hushed  
Buds twitch  
perhaps the wind  
April's first goldfinch  
Here comes the pitch:  
baseball white  
horsehide yin/yang  
strips joined in red stitch  
twirling  
Jesus in the Death House  
dying  
for us Guernseys  
graze  
Daffodils  
spread  
yellow  
behind barbed wire  
the swales  
to the milk barn shadowed  
by Fox Mountain  
Gray Faw's apple blossoms / pink as /  
pink is / Creeley  
*Form is never more*  
*than an extension*  
*of content*  
The Stikeleather boy  
rides  
by on a black horse

- Joseph Bathanti