

**"Game Prayer" by Al Ortolani**

Maybe it's the way boys  
look at each other before the last game,  
their eyes wet and glimmering with rain.

Maybe it's that I catch them  
in these shy moments of waiting,  
turning the world like a pigskin,

flipping it nonchalantly, low spiral  
drilling the air. Maybe it's this  
moment before the splash of lights

before the game prayer  
before you run from the door.  
If so, forgive me

for seeing you so vulnerable,  
in that quiet moment  
before the helmets.