

“Keep Your Eye on the Ball” is published in Chiron Review issue #114,
Winter 2018

<http://www.chironreview.com/product/issue-114-winter-2018/>

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

I was five, my brother was ten.
My dad smacked a hardball right at me.
I flinched and winced.
I didn't even try to catch the freaking thing.

I thought, this is big boy, big man,
baseball bat stuff.
Hard as dead cork.
Where is my place in this?

Keep your eye on the ball, my dad shouts.
I stand there holding my uncle Gerry's
old Chicago mitt,
oiled with neetsfoot nearly to extinction.

I won't cry.
I know how to be a blurr, a, shadow,
how to mock it up.
I watch like a study hall monitor.

My dad loves me more.
But he is playing for my brother.
Always trying to catch up on their thing,
which is erratic.

There is a generosity to my dad,
an anger to my brother.
And me? A sleight of hand.

My dad bunts with the Louisville Slugger,
thirty-two ounces of hickory.
Bonk goes the hardball,
careening off our soft pocked lawn.

Maybe my mom will bake something
that will stop this nonsense.