

# Sign for My Father, Who Stressed the Bunt

By David Bottoms

On the rough diamond,  
the hand-cut field below the dog lot and barn,  
we rehearsed the strict technique  
of bunting. I watched from the infield,  
the mound, the backstop  
as your left hand climbed the bat, your legs  
and shoulders squared toward the pitcher.  
You could drop it like a seed  
down either base line. I admired your style,  
but not enough to take my eyes off the bank  
that served as our center-field fence.

Years passed, three leagues of organized ball,  
no few lives. I could homer  
into the left-field lot of Carmichael Motors,  
and still you stressed the same technique,  
the crouch and spring, the lead arm absorbing  
just enough impact. That whole tiresome pitch  
about basics never changing,  
and I never learned what you were laying down.

Like a hand brushed across the bill of a cap,  
let this be the sign  
I'm getting a grip on the sacrifice.

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