Philip Booth

Game

Between periods,
boys at the urinals,
boymen, menboys, telling AIDS jokes,
yelling *Ain't the game great.*
Jesus,
'djou see 'em rack that one up
right at the goal . . .
Freshman girls
in the stands,
screaming at referees
their fathers' utmost obscenities.
They must have learned
in the womb,
here or in Rome, at some earlier series,
limp but awake, the way,
in their parents' arms,
tonight's kids are fallen.
The other side
of the glass partition
the hurt players lie,
scattered like death at Antietam,
the trainers working over them, working
them over,
to get them back in the game.
O, its sheer violence,
our innate violence,
my anger squared in that tight arena
until I could not speak, or stay, but
walked myself out into winter sky,
out through
a door where a woman stamped me
with an ink pinetree,
sure,
since I'd paid so much,
I would come back in. _ _