

## Wilderness House Literary Review 8/4

*Tom Sheehan*

### **Teddie Boy**

Nothing can grab this old soldier as much as seeing Teddie Boy, pilot, warrior, hitter, stealing the thunder of the All-Star Game, Fenway Park, the year 2000, and recalling with vivid clarity of a mind set that can never move, the day, the hour, the temperature, the way the sun slashed into a whitened valley in Korea in 1951, and the artillery's Forward Observer, in a hole with me, saying of the Marine flight strafing over us, out in front of us, bugging down the valley only after every round of ammunition was spent, "That's Ted Williams and his gang."

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### Ted Williams

Eyes, wrists, stubbornness, all put together in one machine,  
and you rode that little pill over my head behind the bullpen  
sucking on Budweiser;

and that other machine, winged, blue-borne, high over a Korean hill  
where I sucked on my guts and dreamed of the tarp being pulled back  
on a cloudy day, one day soon.

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### In Cold Fields

They left us then,  
we in our sneakers  
and innocence  
of those bright summer days,  
to go away from us  
with our big brothers,  
left us lonely and miserable  
on corners, in cold fields  
with all the long ball hitters gone,  
the Big Sticks of the neighborhood,  
and the Big Wood of the Majors,  
and we cried in dark cells of home  
for our brothers and bubble gum heroes,  
a community of family.

Oh, Eddie's brother not yet home  
from someplace in World War II,  
Zeke's brother who owned the soul of  
every pitcher he ever caught,  
a shortstop the Cards owned,  
Spillane, I think, his name;  
and in that great silence out there  
Billy centerfield left his arm in  
Kwajalein debris.

Oh, brotherless we played our game,  
no deep outfield, no zing to pitch,  
no speed, no power, loveless  
without a big brother  
to show our growing.

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And then, not long after the Braves  
rode that mighty crest,  
our turn came,  
and we left our brothers on  
corners, in cold fields,  
we long ball hitters.