

The Last Two Minutes of the Game

by Natalie McNabb

“Do the last two minutes matter?” you ask, turn off the game. We all wrestle you for the remote. Later, in your rusted Bug, with red and yellow gumballs spilled and rolling around the floorboards, I stick my hand out the window into the rain to push your broken wipers

back

and

forth,

back

and

forth.

Just after you turn seventeen your dad passes from cancer and, then, you begin loving a girl he called your ‘young and sweet.’ Her parents say she’s just fourteen, too young, but they can’t stop you no matter how much they shake their heads

back

and

forth,

back

and

forth.

Spring is interrupted by you leaving for boot camp, but you visit that summer. When you pull up to the diner you seem older in your fatigues and new Jeep, its wipers beating rain

back

and

forth,

back

and

forth.

You ask where she is. I say they must've put steroids in your food, but you don't hear me. You're too busy looking for 'your young and sweet'. We all order burgers and fries. You don't finish; I do. Mark finally tells you that she's found another. You shake him

back

and

forth,

back

and

forth.

You must've run along Eagle Creek that night, flying amongst oaks in the moonlight like an angel with your dad's old gun and, then, huddled there upon your knees you sent yourself off to a different, kinder world.

At your funeral I watch so many, especially your mother, shaking their heads

back

and

forth,

back

and

forth.

I get up, walk out. I hope you'll forgive me for that, and I think you do. I'm sure you'd tell me now, if you could, that the last two minutes matter. They really do.

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