

The God of His Game

He was born on a concrete schoolyard
Weaned at a tender age and thrust into the athletic jungle.
Mostly watching, imitating his older heroes,
Biding his time until his moment arrived.
I watched his meteoric ascent to the pinnacle of every level he entered.
They marveled at his finely sculptured frame
And shouted at his every creative move
Toward the ever present ten foot objective.
The leather ball seemed to be an appendage to his oversized hands
As he dribbled and passed to a free education, fame, and fortune.
Like a fine wine, he improved with age.
We saw him as indestructible then as
We read of his new life of riches and bright lights.
The asphalt jungle he struggled to leave behind remained
Now filled with budding athletes once like him
All possessing the same dream he had thousands of games ago.
But time moved on, the bounces became inconsistent,
The Nureyev leaps were too few and far between.
Mortality zeroed in with a vicious vengeance and
He refused to honor the signs.
Nightly he dressed, praying for that magical moment
When, like an orchestra, the body and mind join as one
To transcend the physical limits.
Despite his impassioned pleas, it never happened...
The cheers turned to jeers as
He continually defended his prolonged decline.
He finally faded into oblivion, clutching his memories and
Tales of the rise and fall of his personal dynasty.
He returned to the playgrounds and hours of games and
Many forgot, but I remember, and delight in the trips through time
When I saw him glide through space
Defying laws of motion and controlling his destiny...
The god of his game, if he only knew
Of the joy he gave and the respect he earned
From those of us who always knew.

Frank Allocco: January 1981