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.”
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.
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.
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.