Seventh Inning Stretch

Sal Cetrano

The shadows creep in another twenty feet
between innings five and sixth. just as they've
done each day all the hot, cloudless summer.
Swallowing home plate like a marshmallow,
darkness fields the ballpark's sacrifice
and hands the first unlucky batter 3-D glasses.

A bleacher bookie's luck—one run down, runners
at the corner's, and God plays spin-the-planet!
Light towers extend their spindly latticework:
the home dugout sprouts a charcoal beanstalk.
A fat coach visits the mound, playing for time,
one game of inches crawling within another.

The pitcher, standing sun like a prophet
on a mountainside, tosses fastballs which,
like parables, lose their light at the last
instant. Fifty feet of brilliance turn
to ten of swift eclipse. Batters chop at air.
The home crowd rises. The shadows march on.

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