
SKETCH OF THE SON OF A PRACTICAL MAN / *Jeff Gundy*

He was quick but reliably erratic,
if he'd just crashed home through the catcher's
glove to score he was sure next to fumble
a pop fly or throw six feet over someone's head.
Why just this moment he tried
to flick an ant off his pants
and left a thick and ugly gray stain
all over. Never mind. You go
with what got you here, and if it hits
.312 in slow-pitch softball
you try not to brood on the other
seven times out of ten.

So he goes. Glimpsing at straws,
grouching at streets, galumphing the sink
until black shreds of miserable stinky stuff
lie everywhere and his hands smell for hours
and he dabs at the floor with a washrag
he hopes he'll remember not to use
on his face later. He tries the tap again
and by God, the water vanishes through the trap
like a cockroach escaping the light, fluid
and beautiful in its flight toward the center.
He lets it run, dreaming of it slipping through
the sewer tile, through the creaky small-town
system, into bright sun and stink
at the treatment plant. He loses himself
in the laws of this world, that what
weighs most will sink, that what is small
and light enough will rise.