

## Girl In The Dirt

She lay in the dirt  
In front of our bench  
Luxuriant  
In full uniform  
Like a sparrow  
Cavorting in a birdbath of dust.  
Fourteen.  
I had been trying to get her to slide all spring.  
And now she just lay there  
As the game progressed  
Soaking in the sun  
Talking to the other substitutes  
Flaunting her license to get dirty.  
I almost said, Get up  
Clean yourself off  
That looks bush.  
Then I thought  
Why not support this ethic of grit?  
So I sneaked a peek at her butt between pitches  
The best-looking girl on the team,  
The sweetest, most conscientious.  
And just let the other team think what they wanted.  
To my surprise  
We won.  
And they threw cold water over me from the bucket.  
Some missed and fell on our fourteen-year-old.  
She said  
"I needed that."

STEPHEN SARACENO