

... from *Macaroni and Cheese Manifesto* (Third Edition)  
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## For the Athletes Unsung

Here's a song about playing the game—  
about glory and heartbreak and truth,  
About three unsung men whose good names should be raised  
for the sake of the “red, white and blue.”  
They say “Winner take all!” is a natural call,  
but in truth it's a shame,  
For a nation obsessed with one slice of the best  
chokes its children with pain.

Yes, these three once performed side-by-side  
with the best of the best in the land,  
But because of some “twist” a great chance each did miss  
to alight on the stand;  
Pray, what “twist” could engender a miss  
but the imperceptible truth—  
A split second, a hair, an opinion, a stare . . .  
an odd phase of the moon.

So our story begins in Lake Placid,  
and ends with this now-famous line—  
“Do you believe in miracles? Yes!”—  
and we all went along for the ride:  
Thus the Stars-and-the-Stripes beat the Soviets,  
and ice hockey captured the gold—  
Faith in youth, revolution and victory—  
a century's whole story all told.

In the haze of our wild exultation,  
    things died that we all failed to see,  
For Dave Delich, Jack Hughes and Ralph Cox,  
    their young names and young hopes and young dreams;  
You see these were the last of the players  
    whom circumstance cut from the squad,  
And I bet all the tea in old China  
    that each felt abandoned by God.

While the victory band sailed in heaven,  
    the souls of some men swirled in hell;  
Oh those feelings, those feelings, those feelings—  
    to many are known all too well:  
Desperation and loss might describe them,  
    or blackness or madness or pain—  
Oh those feelings of rage and injustice—  
    all prices of playing the game.

Now it's true about every dream realized  
    that sacrifice has to be made,  
But it's true that all winners with clear eyes  
    do know where their debts should be paid:  
While the usual thanks go to coaches,  
    to parents, officials and friends,  
It's the athletes unsung who prop high  
    all who've won in the bittersweet end.

So remember the likes of Dave Delich,  
    of athletes Jack Hughes and Ralph Cox,  
They're your teammates in truth  
    and your literal boost to that cereal box;  
Sing a song for the likes of these athletes—  
    a prayer for the athletes unsung,  
For in God's perfect view—the simplest Truth—  
    glory and heartbreak are won!

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[Note: The poet, a 1977 graduate of Boston University, was a competitor in the 1980 Canadian Olympic Team Trials in freestyle wrestling.]