

Behind the Bench

Let me take you to a game tonight,
sit with me behind the bench
where we can hear the slap stomp squeak
of sneakers dashing across polished slats,
where we can see the players'
sinewy arms stretch to slam two points,
or reaching, grab a rebound,
run down court in a crashing pack.

Listen to the coach's hissed commands
to his close circle of huddled men;
breathe in their heady scent
of sweat, sweat that beads
and glistens on sleek shoulders,
hanging dew drops on faces
taut in concentration,
deaf to the din from the stands
filled with fans.

Let me take you to a game tonight
and tell me when it's over
that you are not hoarse from cheering
or sore from tensing
every muscle
when one soul
stood alone
at the free throw line
with three seconds left
and the score tied.