

# Red's Tire Barn Titans

*Ken Raines*

They are overmatched from the beginning.  
Even the black block numbers on their backs  
seem to loom on the jerseys that hang slack  
and flap about their narrow bodies, smooth  
and sinewed as peeled twigs. Unfurled and loose,  
they imagine rising with every gust. Winning,  
at least to the sidelined boys who grab at dry  
tufts of grass, jostle each other, and fall  
to their backs, laughing at the autumn sky,  
winning, to them, is still hypothetical.  
To them, even the rules are abstract and fluid.  
It's not strictly soccer, but what else can we call  
the way they flock and wheel around the ball,  
their random grace, like leaves spinning in liquid.