

Poem for my brother to read silently in his bedroom window before the gregarious hospice nurse arrives

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [January 23, 2013](#) issue

The good sweet Lord knows I have nothing wise to say about anything  
Whatsoever; certainly that has been proven over the last fifty-five years  
That we have known each other. And while spiritual verve is inarguable,  
Religious pronouncements at a time like this can sound awfully shallow.  
So all I want to do this morning is find some word that can approximate  
The love I feel. Affection and respect are ingredients, sure, and certainly  
Laughter and stories, especially those that start out *remember that time?*,  
Because stories are a terrific way to say things that you can't find words  
For. I keep wanting to push deeper, but I can't get deeper than the story  
Of the time we broke your finger—all us kid brothers attacking the king  
At once, ostensibly in the flow of a football game, but really we wanted  
To take you down, to miraculously drop the *taoiseach*, because we loved  
You, because you were our hero, because you were the tallest and oldest,  
Because you laughed, even with your finger bent in the wrong direction,  
Knowing that we were so furious because a bruising tackle is a language  
Also. You can say a lot about love by hammering your brother in a game,  
It turns out. You knew what we were saying. I remember you taped your  
Finger back together and didn't bother to tell Mom. We admired that too.