

Good move, 1962

by [Charles Hughes](#) in the [June 3, 2020](#) issue

Fifties split-level, clapboards olive green  
When we moved in that June. Big trees green, too.  
(We'd come from a gaunt, treeless subdivision.)  
Green, too, the nearby river and a fence  
Of painted wood, a four-foot outfield fence  
Prettying up the nearby baseball diamond.  
How happy these things seemed to me at ten,  
Even though I'd heard poured out inside our car—  
Father, small sister, mother up in front,  
And in the back, two younger brothers, me—  
My parents' ample fears about the price.

Hot nights, I'd ask to sleep on the screened porch.  
There, listening to crickets and the White Sox,  
Watching as fireflies made light of the dark,  
Covered by my soft quilt of summer air,  
I'd get this sense of a kind world, in which  
I somehow had a place. (My father's fatal  
Unhappiness still lurked a long way off.)  
I never thanked my mother for my childhood,  
A gift of much most children are denied.  
The Father's Day before my father died—  
I thanked him then, the one and only time.