

JIM JOHNSTONE

289 at the Gaslamp

Forty one meters per second
from hip to head,

body a faultline, splitting
and returning to rest.

Cumulus settled, seams still
in lanolin and twine—

the first strike, crowd a gasp
of discord and dust.

Satchel Paige shifts his weight,
the ease of flight

numbing his fingers, our small
screen's cathode picture.

Tonight, Crossbills alight on
palms at the Gaslamp,

circle our table like outlaw
planets, hardballs

veering from their nebulous spin.
In a haze of sepia,

clusters of birds pitch their wings
at the dark, tighten

their round breasts like fists.
Arm finding rhythm

Satch releases again, hand open,
locked in a half-wave.

