

BRAD BUCHANAN

## Tending Goal

To keep emptiness immaculate,  
I practise an old and reactive art.  
This frame is solid, webbed and ready  
to take whatever my selfish body  
will not smother, absorb or deflect.

I crouch on tiptoe, turning my back  
on what I protect, assessing the streak  
and sinew of play, the likelihood  
of facing an as yet invisible shot,  
cramped in the moment's crowded, tense  
uncertainty—sometimes my stance  
is justified, sometimes erased  
by chance or intention's quick release.

The best is when I'm already down  
and in danger of letting a weak one in  
on a negligent rebound—I offer my hands,  
my face, my chest, I invite the wounds  
instead of the guilty ghostliness  
of goalies, their untouched irrelevance.

I ask for the unintended gift  
of inaccurate desire—the long shift  
drawing to its natural close  
with a point-blank effort, a drive to the glove

hand side, high enough for me to wave  
at it, flag it down, hold it, make the lucky  
save even better with a snatch and a look  
at the fruit that even bad netminders pluck  
every now and then.

But this garden, the game  
cannot go on if I don't give my charmed  
and tarnished prize back, straighten up and turn  
to what was missed—this form, still aligned  
with the crease in the mind to which all true dreams tend.