

2001

The Rise and Fall

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Recommended Citation

Venniro, Joe (2001) "The Rise and Fall," *The Angle*: Vol. 2002: Iss. 1, Article 15.
Available at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol2002/iss1/15>

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Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: Volume 2, Issue 1, 2001.

JOE VENNIURO

THE RISE AND FALL

Sunny, beautiful.
Nippy, very windy.
Ball is kicked off,
The game has begun.

High, swirling winds,
Playing tricks on the ball.
Darting wildly from right to left,
I get under it and drop it.
For my efforts, an errant elbow
Sends me to the hard ground, reeling.
Wheezing and motionless, though
okay,
Just the wind knocked out of me.

We trudge on,
As the big maple tree
Gives us a strip tease
The ball is snapped.
It's a run, right up the gut.
Braced for contact, I make the tackle.
His head hits my lip,
Blood drips, courtesy of a fat lip

Sky drastically changes,
Hues of purple and gray appear.
Rain falls and wind whistles away,
Man, my ears are cold.

Line up on the right,
Wipe the snot off my face,
Blood off my lip,
Sweatshirt jacket sleeve serving a purpose.
Pump-fake and go,
I got my guy beat.
Racing for the ball, I dive,
Hydroplaning through the end zone.

The game is over.
Limping my way home,
Socks and shoes soaked by the rain,
Sweatpants and shirt caked in mud,
Body bruised and battered,
Nose mistaken for deer Rudolph.
Slipping and tripping,
Over a cornucopia of wet, discolored leaves.

Two things I desire,
To make me feel whole.
Not material nor trivial
A hot shower and a warm bed.