He’s yelling again, but it’s not his fault.  
He’s a good man.  
He even put Bible verses and a C.S. Lewis quote  
At the start of the offensive playbook.  

From experience, he knows we must be better than we are  
If he’s to keep his job and not explain to his wife and 12-year-old  
That they must move again,  
To a new town after only one year in this new town.  
It’s not his fault.  

So I listen, obediently chopping my feet  
And slamming my plastic-protected pectorals  
Into the turf, 10, 15, 20 times.  
Anymore would have been counterproductive.  
He still needs us to run plays.  

And win.  
That is the point after all  
Of dark winter mornings spent vomiting into pine needles  
And uncounted practice-time concussions  
What really defines a concussion anyway?  
I can’t remember.  

I remember to look for the signal  
Wing Right Over.  
Remember OVER. Last time you didn’t, and he yelled more.  
Jet Al Flood.  

This call is relayed through choreographed motions  
Of redshirt freshmen quarterbacks  
Who are more likely to quit or transfer  
Than ever play in a game.  

My mind translates their signals into a picture  
In which the X, that’s me—  
Might as well be 24601, but it’s 37 on my jersey—  
MUST outside release.
I won’t get the ball but should still run as hard as I can
And expect it.
That’s just what you do.
This is just what I do.
I love it.
(I love it.)
I love it.