

Iowa City, 1962

Donald Justice playing
softball, dark shades
cloaking his courtliness
like a bandit's mask on an

owl, but he'll not be
courtly for long
anyway: a call goes
against him, and his cheeks flame,

his arm goes up in a
pumping protest
against the vagaries
of wind, spin, fingertips' torque—

the only subtleties
to elude him?
I so wanted to be
like him then, perhaps even

up to and including
that innocence,
that wild softball passion,
that one hapless assurance.

—*Tad Richards*