

You Were a Good Man, Sparky
by Patricia Smekal
for Charles Shultz

For fifty years
your offspring leapt off
the yellow legal pad each day
and headed for the strip.
For fifty years we laughed
and lined up alongside

a parade of small animals
and kids - drawn from life
with an Easterbrook Radial pen -
who waited at school-bus stops,
stood on pitchers' mounds,
conversed with wordless birds.

You knew
high hopes often get tangled
in trees, every ninth inning
can be lost, any test
may earn a D-minus.

You knew us, we who drag
our security behind us, place faith
in pumpkins, seek
curb-side advice, waste talent
on toy pianos, play-act
heroes, speak loneliness
to cacti.

You were a good man, Sparky.
How can we forget you?
You knew us, knew
those of us who keep trying,
but somehow never get
to kick that football.