

MICHAEL MARBERRY

# Chief Song

– Robert Parrish (1976-1997)

*Parrish et. al vs. NCAA (1975) resulted in Robert Parrish and other student-athletes being declared ineligible for college athletics because of standardized testing scores, thereby expunging their accomplishments from the record books.*

What have I done to be proud of?

Rather, what can I say I have done  
to be proud of? I had my troubles

connecting to the known universe  
when it was simply old—let alone

the new theories it may be ageless  
and to me, therefore, entirely alien.

I know what I have done; I cannot  
prove it in the presence of absence.

Outside, the air is always horrible,  
mechanical: an excavator teething

at the gills of the flat-black asphalt  
in rumbled core-hunger. Already,

I have said too much. Too often  
the breath of me moves like quail

in the scatter, and a dread gathers  
suddenly like some ominous earth

occurring at cardinal-north, strange  
in weight with dangerous creatures,

with double-zeroes. I don't want  
to return to the start but I have to:

What have I done to be proud of?