

## VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

By Norman Minnick

Watching baseball with my grandfather-in-law  
I study his varied expressions  
as he tells tales about good old days  
bathed in the blue-green glare of his TV  
rabbit ears tin foiled to the east,  
the volume turned up for old ears,  
his large pale hands streaked with blue veins  
draped over his knees like moth-eaten doilies.  
“Hell,” he says out the side of his mouth  
like Clint Eastwood might if he were here indignant  
to my company, “Hell, is hearing your buddy scream  
and not being able to reach him.”  
Honestly, all I really heard him say was “Hell.” The rest  
was garbled. He probably said, “If that woman  
don’t get home soon with the ice cream...”  
Barry Bonds is about to break Hank Aaron’s  
home run record. The bottom of the fifth.  
The count is 3 and 2. A foul ball. Then the hit.  
The camera pans to an ecstatic crowd.  
Fireworks. Cheers. He watches without expression.  
“I’ll be damned,” he says, which I am sure of.  
“I’ll be damned,” he repeats as colors blur behind  
the Giant rounding third base at an easy trot  
into the arms of his teammate.