

Greatness

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It came easy, then – winning big at Chinese
checkers – finding, behind a slab
of bubblegum, Mickey Mantle’s aw-shucks grin.

*When you’re as great as I am, it’s hard
to be humble*, crowed the plaques
we lifted from the five-and-ten. Years

before jobs could mash us into slime,
or love could pound us Parkinsonian,
we would-be all-stars scanned the sky.

Aspirations big as blimps, we scowled
and squinted like our dads,
a month’s bills spilled in front of them.

Finally, day dimmed. Streetlamps
blinked, flickered, flared. Only the first
who saw this had the legal right,

but up and down Chantilly Lane every night
all summer long, “Lights on,
I’m great!” in one loud voice we’d call.