

by William Meiners

Friends of *Sport Literate*,

Who knew Norway would be so dominant in the Winter Olympics? I don't pay much attention, but I'm usually rooting for the Jamaicans. Our *Sport Literate* "Winter Resistance 2026" issue, now at the printer and slated for arrival in the first days of March Madness, gets off to a snowy start before winding its way through nine reflections for the upcoming baseball season. This man on two skis takes flight over one of our best collectives in years, weighing in at a bulky 144 pages. No lightweight poetry and prose here.

If you have kept up with us for anytime at all, you'll find both grizzled and relatively new veterans, as well as some first-time poets and writers who recently discovered us. Admittedly, with a little too much testosterone, the lineup includes Scott Bandremer, Ann Bauleke, David Blumenfeld, Jeremy Brown, Rick Burton, Elizabeth Carroll, Jon Fain, Dave Fromm, Benedict Giamo, Alan Harawitz, David Harris-Gershon, Jacob Hibbard, Dan Hill, Paul Hostovsky, Sydney Lea, William Loizeaux, Brandon McNeice, William Meiners, Scott F. Parker, MK Punky, Ernesto B. Reyes, Billy Reynolds, David J. Rothman, Henry Schipper, Kareem Tayyar, Guy Thorvaldsen, Frank Van Zant, Howard Wach, and Robert Wallace (a new Robert Wallace).



Should you not be on our mailing list, I will gladly double check for you. And we'd be pleased to take you on as a subscriber and hook up your redheaded cousin with a St. Patrick's Day gift subscription. The two-issue, \$20 subscription is just a couple of clicks away on our [website](#).

## SL SAMPLES

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It's not rhetoric or hyperbolic to call Benedict Giamo one of our "[Best Americans](#)"; he got that nod from *The Best American Essays* anthology years ago with a prophetic take on college football called "Played Out." Ben, who has a football poem in the forthcoming pub, offers something even more timely below.

David Ram skated up with this final reflective poem in our "Fall Classics 2025" issue. And Scott Bandremer, a photographer and writer, shares his joy spent with fellow disc golfers in the woods — also a welcome bit of levity in the forthcoming printed pub.

### Olympic Pressure

by Benedict Giamo

It comes not  
from pleading with the gods  
but from chasing gold  
or at the very least  
a place on the podium  
far below the heights of Olympus  
yet in the spotlight nonetheless,  
for the blinding lights of Media  
can topple the very tallest



Jason Wendel, "Achilles' Axel."  
Artwork created using Gemini.

and cut him down to size  
as we see time and again.

Take Ilia Malinin for example,  
figure skater par excellence,  
and ask yourself: Was it  
the God Quad that deposed  
the mere mortal Quad God  
or the frenzied hype  
of advertised sport ravenous  
for ratings and revenue?

He was felled not once but twice  
in the men's singles free skate  
but just who was to blame  
for the spiraling mental lapse?  
Well no one but Ilia it seems,  
who felt "insurmountable pressure,"  
no doubt a bad case of the yips,  
unless, of course, one imagines Paris,  
prince of Troy, hiding in the wings  
taking aim with longbow  
and, guided by Apollo's sure hand,  
landing a perfect strike  
in the aching Achilles heel  
of swiftly spinning hubris.

**Benedict Giamo** is a professor emeritus of American Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He has published literary studies of William Kennedy and Jack Kerouac as well as books on both contemporary and historical homelessness. He is a regular contributor to *Sport Literate*, which ran "Played Out," earning him a notable nod in *The Best American Essays*.

## Skating Away

by David Ram  
for Annie

Last June I rowed us through this quiet cove,  
and now we chatter over crunchy ice.

Mama and I push and glide past Nana,  
shuffling in winter boots, as you toddle  
about on double runners, skittering  
to and fro like a squirrel in the snow.

When you toss aside the milk-crate trainer  
and ramble ahead alone, we follow  
your meandering path beyond the point,  
regroup and pose for family photos.

Then Nana snuggles you between her legs  
in the sled, I pull you through figure eights  
across the humbling ice, and Mama leads  
our modest parade, all of us beaming.

**David Ram** retired from teaching community college and lives with his wife in Easthampton, Massachusetts, where he practices writing, rowing, and grandparenting. His recent poems appear in *Amethyst Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Sport Literate*, *Stone Poetry Quarterly*, *The Orchards Poetry Journal*, *Unearthed*, and elsewhere.



Jason Wendel, "Skating Away."  
Artwork created using Gemini.

## The Douchebags of Skylands Finding Connection, One Throw at a Time

by Scott Bandremer

*A band of misfits, a forest full of chains, and a lesson in how to be human.*

*Bzzzzz. Bzzz Bzzz.*

I peeled open my eyes, slowly turning towards my phone. Six-thirty a.m. A Sunday morning my wife and I had sworn to sleep in after a long, chaotic week, to pretend adulthood occasionally came with rest.

I could feel it. She was already awake, peering at me over the satin berm like an artillery scout awaiting bombardment.

*Bzzzzz. Bzzz Bzzz.*

"It's the Douchebags again," she muttered with resignation.

Of course, she was right. It was always the Douchebags.

## The Secret Society of Throwers

I'm part of a club — part sport, part therapy, part traveling circus — called *disc golf*.

And yes, I know what you're thinking. It's that thing hippies do in public parks, right? The poor man's golf. The stoner's excuse to loiter. The weird cousin of ultimate frisbee.

Fine. You're not wrong. But you're not right either.

Disc golf is a bona fide sport — legit, growing fast, and quietly taking over the world's green spaces. Nearly four million players. Sixteen thousand courses. There's a pro tour with true international championships; sponsorships; even million-dollar endorsement deals — like Paul McBeth's 10-year, \$10-million pact with Discraft.

Watch a PDGA event on YouTube — perhaps featuring Calvin Heimburg, Paige Pierce, or Kristin Lätt — and tell me it's not beautiful. Those discs cut through the air like poetry. It's golf without the pretense, yoga with a scoreboard.

The world can be a painful, difficult place at times. Not on the course. Here, it's about your next perfect throw. Here, the world drops away, and you're along for the ride.

[Read more...](#)

**Scott Bandremer** is a writer and lifelong disc golfer based in the New York/New Jersey metro area. He's still trying to make par on hole 18.



*The author (front) and some douchebags*