

Bank Shot

Greg McBride

I asked about the old days, when they
were my age—my mother scrambling eggs,
Dad and I at the table. He aimed a glance
sidelong at her, then took a shot toward me:

We've been very lucky, Son.

He must have meant their gamboling, teenage
marriage after weeks of jitterbug jokes
and getting-to-know-you's in the Abilene
Lady Luck pool hall in 1941.

Her silence like the hush of a tournament
match, the cue's tip skittish at the ball,
probing for angle and spin, velocity,
the all-important leave and follow-on.

By now—both gone so long, both unlucky—
I understand his game, how words can
travel in disguise, their spin covert,
as on that morning when his mumbled plea

caromed off me—sharply, as off
a felted cushion—and spun toward her,
determined at the stove:

*Come on, Honey, let's play.
Let's keep the run alive.*