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.*