

# One for the Ages

*by* Con Chapman

It was 1984, that foreboding year, I now  
recall. You were in the hospital,  
your cat having snagged your nail.  
It appeared you might lose your finger.  
I was there with you, even though we weren't



boyfriend/girlfriend anymore.  
You had a TV in your room;  
there was supposed to be somebody  
in the other bed, but there wasn't,  
so you could watch what you wanted.  
I asked if I could turn on the Celtics  
and Knicks, Eastern Conference  
Semi-Finals, and you said yes. You don't  
remember now, but it was like Ali-Frazier,  
Bernard King and Larry Bird in that series;



up and down, coast to coast, going at each other, cutting no slack, giving no quarter. We'd hold hands, your swollen finger like a sprained ankle, and I'd watch when we weren't talking, and sometimes when we were. You knew what I was doing, yet you smiled, you didn't care, because at least I was there—somebody was there with you. The Celtics and Knicks were on tonight, first time in over a decade



in the playoffs together, and I thought of you. I hear you have a daughter now—maybe as wild as you, as crazy as you were before we met. I hope there's someone on the edge of her bed,



holding her hand when she lands in the hospital, attached or not. There with her as he peeks at some dumb game with a sideways glance and a smirk on his face, watching and part of one for the ages.

