

Phantom Lovers

David Phelps, Capital University

Net strung tight, bruises in the service boxes,
we gasp, for air, as sweat
carves rivers in our wrists. We grip tightly,

racquets our phantom limbs, and feel pain,
in the strings, in our palms with each passing shot.
This intimate relationship, incomprehensible

to anyone else; but, we know every aspect
of the other's body:

which arm is stronger, which leg will tire
faster. Muscle memory dictates
our dance, familiar positions

during play
words do not pass; rather, grunts—
uttered ecstasies—are the language
of this enthusiastic competition. The claims

in our eyes, inaccessible
though the court's sun shines

through victorious smiles, while sweat
beads create lakes in our palms.

We shake—
Good Game

—and part ways. Imprint of the other's body
still fresh on our skin.