

Dear Basketball,

From the moment
I started rolling my dad's tube socks
And shooting imaginary
Game-winning shots
In the Great Western Forum
I knew one thing was real:

I fell in love with you.
A love so deep I gave you my all —
From my mind & body
To my spirit & soul.
As a six-year-old boy
Deeply in love with you
I never saw the end of the tunnel.
I only saw myself
Running out of one.
And so I ran.
I ran up and down every court
After every loose ball for you.
You asked for my hustle
I gave you my heart
Because it came with so much more.
I played through the sweat and hurt
Not because challenge called me
But because YOU called me.
I did everything for YOU
Because that's what you do
When someone makes you feel as
Alive as you've made me feel.
You gave a six-year-old boy his Laker dream
And I'll always love you for it.
But I can't love you obsessively for much longer.
This season is all I have left to give.
My heart can take the pounding
My mind can handle the grind
But my body knows it's time to say goodbye.
And that's OK.
I'm ready to let you go.
I want you to know now
So we both can savor every moment we have left together.
The good and the bad.
We have given each other
All that we have.
And we both know, no matter what I do next
I'll always be that kid
With the rolled up socks
Garbage can in the corner
:05 seconds on the clock
Ball in my hands.
5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1
Love you always,
Kobe

Epistle [ih PIS uh I] poems, from the Latin
"epistula" for "letter," are poems that read as
letters. As poems of direct address, they can be
intimate or funny; free-verse or formal. They can
be addressed to or narrated by anyone or
anything. I chose to address my epistle poem to
_____ because _____.
My poem is [free verse, of name form]