

Memorial Day Birthday—Ozone Park, Queens

by Paul Turner (July 29, 2002)

My cousins from across the river
have ungraced themselves at
the kegs and the whiskeys in the tool shed.

Between their howling and guffawing,
relatives from Delaware shift in chairs,
deeply sweating.

Folks from work file in, in their outfits, loose bracelets,
shaking our hands—and their heads.

The Birthday Boy pedals his new purple Bigwheel
by our kin loosely operating on fumes.

As for me, brother from Boston, I'm not breathing too regular
by the burning grill, under a conspiring sun.

In my wheeze, I'm taillights again, on the Interstate,
unsticking my underwear, and losing the directions
to this garden scene for twelve sinful months.