Fatuous Dialogue #1

by Bill Yarrow

—Was it true, what you wrote in that poem?

—Pretty true.

—What do you mean “pretty true”? Was it true or wasn't it?

—It was as close as you get to truth in poems.

—I don't understand.

—Poems say things like, “It was sunny when I knocked out Bobby Arnstein's teeth.” Maybe it was sunny. Maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was Jimmy Irving not Bobby Arnstein whose teeth I knocked out. Maybe I didn't knock out Jimmy's teeth at all. Maybe I just pushed him. Maybe he hit his head on the railing. Maybe he didn't. Maybe his mother came running out screaming at me. Maybe she didn't. Maybe I didn't smell her perfume mixed with the stink of ginkgo berries as she stood over her unconscious boy. Maybe I did.

—So, poems are lies.

—Pretty much.

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