

# Swings

by Mark Waldrop

My backyard was first  
Grass tickling my bare feet  
Skipping along the bottoms of my toes.  
I broke my arm there; I always hurt myself  
Swinging.

The fair was next, grownup kids  
Having adult fun  
Eating carnival food and drinking grownup things  
When no one was looking.  
Swings bigger and faster with bent depressed rails  
Surrounding  
Swings with muscle.  
Head lolling over the trashcan after what was  
Not nearly enough fun

And then later there was Paul and Janice  
All the good times we should never have had  
Feet dangling over the mattress.  
You and him.

Knees loose belt tight up over the branch  
Pulling hands ready to swing again  
The Elm in my side yard.  
Swing. For a moment sway and then still  
Except shoelaces in the breeze then quiet hanging.  
Like shirts and secrets in my closet.

