

## WILLIAM BOYLE

### *Friend To Childhood, Childhood Friend* (For Jim)

I skipped a rock off your head  
meaning to miss,  
during a time when 'just about' was sweeter  
than a bull's eye.  
Hot chocolate over chess,  
I imagined the ghosts of cows waiting  
for the old west to come clattering home,  
back to your house which used to be a barn.  
Probably we reached escape velocity  
through the car radio, taking us anywhere  
but a hick town. But when I discovered  
rebellion, you rightly kept to the legal magic  
of gum cards and kissing Cathy in the  
untended outfield. When the blood stops, just  
before my eyes, I'll stop seeing you, saying,  
"I can't wait to get into a fight with you!"  
All I can say is that when the stone  
left my hand, I suddenly wanted it back.  
After nearly killing you either by accident  
or by anger, I can still see us  
sharing a parsley cigarette and taking our time  
walking to catechism after school.