

The Day I Became a Poet

A dead raccoon is splayed
At the edge of the cornfield,
Bloated, split open, reeking,
Brutal wounds on each side
Of its fractured neck where
An owl had dropped on it.
I turn it over with a stick.
Its sad, little belly the color
Of the last dingy ears of corn,
The color of Smoky's face
That I recall from years ago
After Imbellis smashed it
With his fist, the blood
Suddenly out of the cheeks
And spouting from the nose
Onto the playground cinders.

Smoky's vacant eyes turned
Inward on his pain, on a day
Long ago when light seemed
Filtered through dirty feathers
And everything smelled like
Hell's wet ashes, and suddenly,
Standing in that ring of boys,
I did not want to grow up anymore.