

Reborn on the 4th of July

When I was a boy
I'd *play war*

unaware
that war
plagued the world
like locust

unaware that the very thing
I was playing
had been happening
since the beginning of time
claiming more innocent boys
than the Catholic church

and the saliva that dribbled from my mouth
represented the blood from
a once living and now dead man

I didn't think of these things
as I took cover in my neighbor's rose bushes
and aimed my stick at the approaching enemy
firing imaginary bullets into their guts-

I'd especially like to play
on the 4th of July,
running through
empty neighborhoods at night
the fireworks rumbling the sky above
like far off bombs exploding
in war-torn Europe

how many times
I was shot and killed
on the sidewalk

only to be reborn
in time
for the firework finale

that called a truce
between all enemies
both foreign and domestic

and we all stood watching them,
our faces
checked with the
firework's light

our grins containing
every freedom
we didn't
deserve