

Song of the Bright Red Bike

*For my father, who survived paralytic polio
at the age of twenty-seven*

It's sixty-two years old. Re-painted blue.
Propped up against a backyard shed. But I
remember it (and always will) brand new –
the bright red Schwinn you brought home one July.

And when I blurted out the question why
you'd bought a girls' bike for your therapy,
you paused in thought before your kind reply
that, now and then, you'd "borrow" it from me.

Soon afterwards, the neighborhood would see
a blazing Spitfire with a girl of ten
flying round the block intrepidly,
who once feared you would never walk again,

who'd learned to balance, pedal, and to brake;
and, thanks to you, the highest road to take.