

Soon Enough

at six
maybe
we shouldn't
count it
but I
remember
hanging
with the
thick chain
around
my neck
in the
neighbor's
backyard

perhaps
we can
say that
it was
just an
accident
but at 7
I also
played
chicken
on the
boulevard
in L.A.

but it was
murder
in my heart
through high school
and did he
know the chance
he took walking

to retrieve
the target
I shot to pieces
the way I
now wanted
to shoot out
the back of his head

away from him
at college
I took my chances
hepatitis
from my first pipe
eyes yellowing
my lips cracked
with dead skin
the nurse wanted
to know if I
always listened
to two stations at once
too weak to bother
tuning the radio
I just said *yes*

the very next term
I managed to lay down
my motorcycle
along Hwy. 101
the back tire blowing at 55
Cinda and I spun on the left peg
as we slid down the road
to end up looking back
at the two lanes of traffic

aimed right for our heads
veering to the shoulders
in plenty of time

I got used to coming close
every couple years even
long after I knew better
like the time I tried to
take off a sweatshirt
while driving south from
San Francisco doing 75
getting it stuck on my head
holding the wheel with my knees
the Volvo swerving across two lanes
headed for a rollover but I was able
to grab enough control to slow down
and take the next offramp to get
the fucking shirt off and just sit
and watch the sweat collect as
my heart raced and the years
settled deeper into my eyes

now it lives in my body with me
all I'd have to do is stop the meds
and drown in chocolate or Manhattans
I could let my blood pressure
blow out all my cells which the nurse
says would first lead to impotence
and you're still young yet
though I like to tell people I've been
an adult since I was five or so
and even looking all the way
back there, I never truly

sought death, which, without
any help from any of us,
and regardless of all the delaying
tactics I can come up with
will find me, soon enough . . .