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## Fourth of July

Jenny Hanning

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## Hanning: Fourth of July

FOURTH OF JULY

Jenny Hanning

Hello beer can sacrificed to the lake  
with your little astronaut inside  
it's what he'd do  
hang a chug-emptied can  
on a length of fishing twine  
and make us sing to Major Tom—  
*Can you hear me?*  
and that was early  
the sky pink and the water red  
sun going down down down  
and the bugs rolling across  
the still water in humming waves  
and blood yet un-spilt  
but then the dark rolls up from under ground  
uncurls and stretches behind the pines  
fingering skyward and yawning 'til it fills  
what there is to fill and the water goes solid and black  
and all the dark is alive and the fighting  
it always starts as laughter  
'til somebody goes and takes it too far  
and behind the boat shack a mother not your mother may be  
kissing a father who is your father and all the mothers  
and not mothers teeter around in their not-for-outdoors shoes  
looking for limes and a sharp knife  
while the men shove and wobble and swing on one another  
and then they forget about it—wipe the blood  
on their sleeves and the dirt on their knees  
and decide to do some fireworks  
and ice cracks when the gin touches it  
and down comes Major Tom's tin can  
and they got it jerry-rigged to a rocket  
and then up and up and boom and sparkle and fall  
*Planet Earth is Blue*

and plunk and sizzle  
and we applaud and the adults all  
crazy with whatever go crazy with whatever  
and then it's bound to happen he'll get you around the middle  
and throw you over his shoulder and cry all you like  
pound on him even—you're seeing upside down  
the boards of the dock and when to the end  
you go in