

Sweet William

In the middle of the Great Depression,
William and his mom
moved into the house on the corner
to take care of Mr. French.

William's clear blue, pre-teen eyes
smiled as he gave us rides in my red wagon.
His soiled sailor's cap sat at a jaunty angle,
flanked by tufts of sun-bleached hair.

In mid-winter, with nothing to spare,
Mother spotted him,
barefoot and without a jacket,
standing in the frozen road.

In mid-summer, when Mr. French died,
they drove across five states
to harvest potatoes in Idaho's heat
Where William died in the fields of a sunstroke.