A Borrowed Childhood Memory, Alloway, 4 July 1967

Mark Jay Brewin Jr.
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Abstract
Fire and strike sevenfold. Salute and witness the grown-ups whiskey stagger around the farmstead and backfield. Crawl among the knee-grass, throw rotting beefsteak tomatoes at your cousins. When hit, yell, *I'm going down* ...

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by Mark Jay Brewin Jr.

for my father

Fire and strike sevenfold. Salute and witness the grown-ups whiskey stagger around the farmstead and backfield. Crawl among the knee-grass, throw rotting beefsteak tomatoes at your cousins. When hit, yell, I’m going down...

Skitter along the cow-fence, into your uncle’s barn, watch him lop off horns with crank-shears, the fresh blunted skull-crowns, the glossy spurt, blood beading down the heifers’ flanks. When asked, stop your ears with newspaper pages, climb barn rafters. Play back what they said, how they said it, Do it, boy. Go on, and spook the pigeons without falling, while they pick them off, one by one, with a .22—don’t slip, breathe through your mouth so you don’t smell the cat-piss. Wait, alone, for hours—fireworks aren’t something to miss.
Mark Jay Brewin Jr won the 2012 Agha Shahid Ali Poetry Prize of the University of Utah Press for his first book manuscript, *Scrap Iron*. His poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Southern Poetry Review, New Madrid, The Hollins Critic, Copper Nickel, Southern Humanities Review, Poet Lore, North American Review, Greensboro Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and elsewhere. He is a graduate of the MFA program of Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.