

Pop a Wheelie

From oil-dank bowels of a nightmare garage you ride
 beknighted, Saturday morning's acolyte, sleep-dazed
but aright, straight for the ramp you built last night

in the driveway in homage to the great adrenaline-hazed
 Evel Knievel—archetype for every dangerboy and bone-
headed troglodyte bent on a bright schematic vying to break

more bones than the Guinness World Record flying prone
 over cars buses lions fountains sharks canyons rattlesnakes—
before the neighborhood wakes. Topping the slope you rev

your banana bike and pedal hard on the approach past
 a hushed gang of squirrels and robins holding their breath
half-hoping this levitation will and won't be your last.

*Did he always wear stars and stripes? Was his helmet
 screwed on tight? Will his next attempt be televised
if he succeeds and fails yet again to reach the light?*

Devil dared and fair-warned, you rocket as advertised
 off a wood plank sailing headlong over fame's coliseum—
into your first kiss and beer and Eucharist, your first dorm

room farewell and first rock concert at the Orpheum,
 your body's first chemistry experiments and first storm
of contrite indignation shadowing your first arrest,

your firstborn's silence like a warm ghost, your island
 that formed in a widening ocean when your first
Greyhound pulled away from the curb taking a friend-

more-than-a-friend, inevitable as the first long gaze
 that followed soaring through every stunt since,
angling for the abyss, realizing too late your trajectory's

off by an inch and this is going to hurt. You brace
 yourself for that embrace.