

MARBLES

The boys had strings to their pouches,  
carried easy treasures:  
loose buttons, marbles, bits of rock,  
pieshaped twobit coins  
found near the railroad.

Rich and poor they played  
long as a boy could shoot,  
angling the pale green thumb callous,  
making the popped dirt fly.

By dusk their mothers called  
a certain foreign language.  
The boys scooped home eyeball aggies  
winking in circled dust  
where the sun had spilled them  
flaming like campfires,  
silent red and battle bright.