

Scars

He told me the story before we married, before
I met his family or walked the farm where he'd
grown up: how as a child he'd played alone,
catching footballs he kicked high enough to run under;
lobbing baseballs onto the shed, then fielding pop flies;

building ramps for his red sting-ray bike—
ramps that sent him, arm first, through the window
of the garage.

Blood beat from the gash in a pulsing arc,
but when he opened the back door
his mother swept him out,
left him standing, red stain soaking the grass
while she fetched a rag and plastic for the car and the long drive
to town, to the doctor and 45 stitches that crawled across
his inner arm.

For twelve years my tongue traced
that shiny snag, caught on the bright hook
in his flesh, repeating the story as if it were mine.
The thirteenth year, I stopped.

I could have sworn I'd thrown that memory back,
but today someone says *scar* and I taste it,
touch for an instant that tender place,
and see again a young boy
bleeding cleanly into the grass.