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**TEACHING THE BOY / Roy Bentley**

When light-invented Beth Vines let go  
the red sixth-Christmas Schwinn  
at the top of Comanche Drive  
*keep pedaling hold on tight*  
I learned in a hurry

the world fell away I was borne forward  
and nothing has been the same

god I was awkward  
and aimed at surviving the desperate  
glide downhill from her  
where were the full-waisted uncles  
heroic large-as-life fathers  
to arrest all progress  
at points of greatest danger  
chaplinesque elder brothers neighbors cousins  
friends who might have by example  
and with a patience carried in the eyes  
defined balance as mastery of having fallen

I have learned essential things  
keeping aright down look-alike streets  
not to lie to myself too easily or often  
the press of rain afternoons suffused  
with summer or sex  
other planets of closeness  
never to forget who held me up  
the pendulous simplicity of fruit ripe to falling  
all this from women or men who love women

some time after and in correct clothes  
others have come with the whole  
of the old war against women against trees  
against all things flowering and said *Come*  
*you are one of us*  
the world fell away I was borne forward  
and nothing has been the same