

Grace

I've never seen
the teenagers across the street
land a trick. I listen
to them curse
each time they fall.
Their skateboards
clattering to the sidewalk,

scraping off graffiti-skin
to reveal the maple
beneath.

Gravity owns the gap
between youth
and young manhood.

On Saturday afternoons,
in the back parking
lot of the First Bristol Federal
Credit Union,
our bodies hovered
over the handrails of steps.
Balancing impulse
and momentum,

we'd hollow out
thick strawberry blunts,
re-stuffing them
with swag stolen
from Tony's older brother.

On the summer of my fifteenth
birthday, I stood
on the top of an eight foot ramp

waiting to feel the air
go out of my body
like a deflating balloon.
Waiting to fall,
trying so hard to hurt
myself for the first time.