

High Stakes

Under the river bridge I pick up a rock,
ask my father, who is upstream
just slightly, how much it's worth
to drill the heavy green pop bottle
hunched in the concrete-thrown shade.
He looks at the bottle, then back up
at me. He says: lunch, but one shot.
After that, we'll just have to see.

I'm a good twenty feet away
from this old glass bottle, buried
deep in its comfortable dirt,
dusty, dull. I cock back my arm,
take a step, heave with the rock.
It just nicks the top, taking off
part of the lip. Dad finds an old brick,
chucks it from the other side of the bridge,
and the green glass explodes,
bits flying into the dirt all around.

Later we grab lunch together,
shaking sand from the cuffs of our jeans
onto checkered taco joint tiles
for others to clean in our wake.

Raccoon

Fish bandit waits,

eyes alert in dark bands,
for ripples within reach.
Flexes small hands.



***Tyler Robert Sheldon's** newest books are the poetry collection *Driving Together* (Meadowlark Books, 2018) and the chapbook *Consolation Prize* (Finishing Line Press, 2018). He has received the Charles E. Walton Essay Award and has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. His poetry, fiction, and reviews have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Los Angeles Review*, *The Midwest Quarterly*, *Pleiades*, *The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, and other venues. Tyler holds an MA in English from Emporia State University and is an MFA candidate at McNeese State University. He lives in Baton Rouge. View his work at TylerRobertSheldon.com.*

