

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## **Peach Cobbler**

By Michael Todd Steffen

My older brother disassembled  
my Schwinn Aerocycle, saddle, chain, and all, because  
I'd ratted him out for smoking cigarettes.

Our parents finally lifted his punishment  
and let him spend the weekend with a friend.  
His bedroom door was left partly open.

The thirty-two-gun frigate with three masts  
through three-tiered sails was obviously too big  
to drift into the inch-diameter neck  
of the quart-sized bottle. I studied  
my handy older brother's shelf ornament  
carefully. Then it dawned on me that the hull,  
magnified by the curvature of the glass,  
was, in fact, small enough to navigate  
the narrow aperture of the dry container.

The mast and sails, as they were strung,  
would fan back like the spines of a porcupine  
and undo the illusion of how the larger vessel  
had come to rest, as it were, shipwrecked, in  
its glassy enclosure. Beneath the sand  
lining the bottle's belly, wood putty  
had been used to fasten the frigate's hull.  
Holding the patient flame of a candle,  
I heated the bottle to soften the adhesive.

At task's end, I poured the small pile  
of sand, the narrow wood chopsticks  
for masts, the string and shell-shaped paper sails,  
and the drippings of heated putty  
onto pages of the daily newspaper.

I set the now-voided bottle back  
on his desk under his reading lamp  
in the room's pregnant silence and closed the door.

All that day, fragrance of peach cobbler  
lingered in the house. Mom was calling me  
downstairs for a taste before we said goodnight.