

# Poetry Porch: Poetry

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## **Brothers**

By W. Arnold Yasinski

Almost twins, Polish name,  
side by side in a snapshot with  
ice-cream cones, his chocolate,  
mine vanilla. Just different

enough in age to be a year apart  
in school. The same teachers,  
expecting him, who isn't me,  
to be me. First thing that's his

alone is illness. Mysterious,  
undiagnosed, painful, studied  
in long hospital stays. Family  
bends life toward him; the line

of us, with tree and presents,  
winding through Jewish General;  
gourmet lamb chops to get him to eat.  
Diagnosis, finally, does little

but provide a name. I marry away  
from that house young, and dread  
his rambling, reminiscing calls.  
I learn of his death by cell

as I walk the street in Providence,  
continue in tears, sorrow for him,  
and for failing him. Years on,  
I want to call to check a memory

or bring him up to speed, then,  
remembering I can't, stagger  
through old regrets. How much  
it would mean now to have  
an almost-twin.