

Poetry Porch: Poetry

My Cousins

By Michael Todd Steffen

Little soul returned from
the little death of sleep,
coming to with intense thoughts

of Shane and Freddie from Pittsburgh
who taught me *Monongahela*
Ohio Allegheny, their version

of *rock paper scissors*.
As out of nowhere. Oh I see them
as we see everybody on the phone

these days in the running stars.
I haven't *been* with them
for over twenty dentist's visits

as their mom my aunt Mira liked to say.
Are they, or one of them, sending
thoughts my way?

Uncanny how memory like dreams
deals you these cards.
Like fish heading up just under

the murky surface of a lake
there almost are Shane's spent
sleepy green green eyes

and Freddie's already
crease-woven brow and hair
that seemed to stand up everywhere.

*Time, I murmur, half-woken, do
the crazy thing and flow
backward and close all*

the gaps between my teeth.
Rubbing my eyes, soft-hearted, trembling, I
want that freer remote hedge

of my family back, near enough
to smell the dryness on their breath,
playing with the rivers in our hands.