

## THE WHISTLE

Placing his fingers in the corners of his mouth,  
Uncle Jim, my surrogate father,  
could emit a whistle heard all over the neighborhood,  
its shrill note a clear signal:  
time to come home,  
time to eat,  
time for bed,  
or something unexpected  
demanded our presence.  
Whatever the reason,  
We heard the whistle,  
dropped everything  
and headed home.

Uncle Jim tried to teach me that whistle.

He never succeeded.

Uncle Jim is long dead;

his skill died with him.

But every now and then,

on rare, quiet moments,

I hear his whistle in the back of my mind,

calling me to come home.

And sometimes I almost think I know

where home is;

And sometimes I almost forget

you can't go home again.

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Poetry