

STEPHEN KOPEL

Shove

I never believed in that disembodied voice
that journeyed small from room to room,
 my body a magic carpet
lifting me in silent thermals out of
 my parents' loud house

I was that bubblegum gargle leaving
 the party's exaggerated laughter
I was that hayride frolicker tickling
the moon's inner ear
waiting for my whispered name
I was that mock monster always teasing
syllables out of the parrot's gutsy squawk

I spent one winter hibernating in
 Webster's Collegiate
 pronouncing all the words
that later fell out of pocket dictionaries
 my hand failed to grasp

That modest voice I recognized in the
 high school gymnasium
basketballs dribbling between
 discomfort and dismay

I was that baritone ready as Nelson Eddy
to hold a whole note a whole lot longer
 than the room was wide

And, because I sang my modest voice
in a small town, it sounded larger than
the billboard above the store that
sold watermelons for a buck

Some kid, they'd say, with a larynx like a
Philco speaker, vocal shine, smooth as polish,
and, all he needs is a push ...