

STEVE MYERS

My Role in the Cold War

In my attic bedroom
I'd breathe in the stratosphere,
hold for a count of Yu-ri Ga-gar-in,
release, breathe in again
to hear the rhythm of the living me
with winter on, as the mice
began their strange migrations
under the floorboards,
and the heatseeking nightbird
panicked in the chimney,
and if I listened, there was Sputnik
beeping. I was sure the Russians
had heard of me — their man
in Buckingham, Pennsylvania,
the KGB, possibly even
Khrushchev knew of certain
inscrutable powers I'd been given,
that the giant elm tree
that heaved over on our Chevrolet
wasn't Hurricane Donna —
that there were reasons
and there were *reasons*
for my fourth-grade teacher's sudden
disappearance, and for the spike
in snow days — I mean,
the whole Supreme Soviet
could see the stage was set:
I was ten, I had a word to say
and I might say it.