Ode to Kool-Aid

Marcus Jackson

You turn the kitchen
tap's metallic stream
into tropical drink,
extra sugar whirlpooling
to the pitcher-bottom
like gypsum sand.
Purplesaurus Rex, Roarin'
Rock-A-Dile Red, Ice Blue
Island Twist, Sharkleberry Fin;
on our tongues, each version
keeps a section, like tiles
on the elemental table.
In ninth grade, Sandra
employed a jug of Black Cherry
to dye her straightened
bangs burgundy.
When toddlers swallow you,
their top lips mustache in color
as if they've kissed paint.
The trendy folks can savor
all that imported mango nectar
and health-market juice.
We need factory-crafted packets,
unpronounceable ingredients,
a logo cute enough to hug,
a drink unnaturally sweet
so that, on the porch,
as summer sun recedes,
Granddad takes out his teeth
to make more mouth to admit
you.

