Novocain

Novocain was expensive in '72.
The dentist barely pricked my gums
to yank two infected molars.

I tasted blood
like a penny on my tongue.
I cried and choked up water
blasted down my throat.

Shut up, kid!

An assistant pried my jaw,
squeezed cheeks.

Another pinned my arms.
The dentist cursed.

My head rocked
with the tugging,
struggle,
loosening roots.

It must have been expensive,
Novocain,
mining those
two black veins.

Three adults hunched like bullies
shaking me down
for my last red cent.