

EDWARD HIRSCH

I Rang the Bell

I rang the bell
to the past
and the owner let me in
so I could climb
seven steps
and stand in the doorway
of a narrowness
that was once my room
on the second floor
of a split-level house
on the corner
of a suburban development
in the village
of my adolescence
and time bent me back
to that fitful night
when I tried to scale
the rusty stairs
of a freight train rolling
out of control in the yard
so I could set the brakes
and stop the runaway
dead in his tracks
but instead
I pulled a bookcase
down on my body
and woke up
startled
to find my parents
frightened in the hallway
and my books—
or was it my future?—
scattered on the floor.