

## Peonies and checkered flags

Peonies and checkered flags,  
radio voices through fluttering  
blades of grass:  
gone racing, the neighbors say.  
Eternal combustion,  
heart across town —  
land rockets' liquid flame  
kissing bricks.  
Children cover their ears  
as colors streak by  
their open eyes: blink,  
you miss it.  
For 100 years  
the world has come here,  
crowded round this oval,  
sun-blasted and alive.  
Amazed at how fast  
the time goes, how fast  
again, and yet again,  
like spring itself, like peonies.

—David Hoppe, Long Beach, IN

From the author: *I remember hearing the Indy 500 being broadcast across my backyard the year Graham Hill won the race — yet another branch of the '60s British Invasion. From that time til this, the race has been part dream, part neighborhood block party for me.*