

## Victory Lane

*Upon the 100th Running of the Indy 500*

The green flag waves and they're off in a blur—  
a spectrum of light darting past us. They almost break  
the barrier of sound, whipping round in the high whir  
hummingbirds make magnified a million times. So much  
rides on the rim, the cusp they cling to each treacherous  
turn. Like charioteers circling the sun, they hold  
steady their nerve to test how close they can edge  
to snatch the spark that sets their name aflame.  
For a hundred years it's been the same, but faster  
and faster they course through the ether, passing us  
like the flow of the years, and now we're drafting  
*Meyer, Rose, Foyt, Unser, Mears, Castroneves*, legends  
that surpass the speed of their shadow and bring us  
to the finish line—to swig the milk and kiss the bricks.

—Shari Wagner, Westfield, IN

*From the author: I was inspired to write this poem after watching a video of last year's Indy 500 drivers talking about why they race and listening to a podcast on Nelson Price's Indiana History Live radio show. I realized I had written poems about historical sites all over Indiana but not about one of the state's most famous places.*