

## Grade Seven Social Studies Unit

The merry-go-round in the back yard  
was once a bedstead my father took apart  
then welded back together into a whirring  
contraption I rode through a season.  
On long afternoons it spun like a pinwheel

among blossoming trees, apple and pear.  
He built it as he built everything else  
in those years, out of scrap metal and bits  
of plywood—swing set, picnic table, tree fort.  
When I think of that merry-go-round I think of

Mesopotamia's golden sands and lunar calendar.  
I think: plow, sailboat, waterclock, stylus.  
When I was twelve I lay on my back looking up  
at the turning world and imagined I was rocking  
in the cradle of civilization. It must have grown

dark, I must have gone in for dinner, but when  
I think of that spring I think of my father  
who died too young. I think of an iron bedstead  
spinning between two rivers, Tigris and Euphrates,  
the fertile delta running between.

PATRICIA YOUNG