

## Mark Saba

### Schizophrenia

The gym teacher pitted us against  
each other. We wrestled, but neither  
gave in. Weekends we walked busy streets,

mindful of the future that would take us  
but safe in our own views.  
Once or twice we skipped school

to fish in the dirty Monongahela  
or Allegheny, catching carp that fed off  
vegetable detritus from the Heinz factory.

I could get you to laugh, to find a break  
from the ping pong in your brain  
but never did I call you out

for being anything I wasn't.  
What's worse: an early diagnosis  
or a slow descent through decades

into a chaos that blurs the line?  
I refuse to name it: the hovering moth  
above my bed at 2 AM, the gentle way

it lingered there, the day after you died,  
then disappeared when I tried to shoo it away.

Mark Saba has been writing fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction for 40 years. His book publications include three works of fiction and three of poetry, most recently *Calling the Names* (poetry) and *Ghost Tracks* (stories about Pittsburgh, where I grew up). Saba's work has also appeared widely in literary magazines around the U.S. and abroad. He is also a painter, and works as a medical illustrator at Yale University. Please see [marksabawriter.com](http://marksabawriter.com).