Born Again in Brooklyn

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I want to be born again
in Brooklyn. Oh, how I would
worship the very playground
where I lost my virginity to a public
school girl, and a few teeth to
slick Italian boys who didn’t take
kindly to my stickball prowess
or mixed blood. How I would fall
to my knees at the foot of the sacred bridge
where my cousin was mugged and
nearly raped at eighteen, and no longer be
wary of Greenpoint’s blind alleys
or the weathered back streets
of Williamsburg where writers now gather
their thoughts: no small share of the fiction
that lines the shelves of my suburban den.
How it would do my soul good
to run Prospect Park, not as if my
life depended on it, and walk Dean Street
where my father’s heart failed in the heat
of a soul blistering piece goods factory.
I’d learn the culture of the Arabs
I foreswore on Atlantic Avenue and
pay homage to the Hasidic Jews whose silent passage over the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway casts a holy shadow. I’d take back the brownstone my brothers and I sold for a song, with its postage stamp yard, and climb to the roof where we went from cigarettes to joints and turn instead, with heartfelt reverence, to the open face of the Manhattan skyline and proclaim my new faith.