

Omaha Beach

JON MALCHIODI

My only friend Bill sits beside me.
He smells like booze and is burning,
not to his knowledge, the last cancer
dart those farm boy fingers will ever roll.

He taps me on the shoulder and asks me
a question, one that I can barely hear over
the loud churning of the engine on this moving
death bed we so proudly defend.

"You ever been in love?" No way I say.
"Well I have, and I want you to meet my wife."
He hands me the center fold of Miss June 1944
and chuckles like all those hick bastards do.

He stands up to tuck the picture back into his jacket
and I feel a warm splash on my face and get a steel toe to the chin.
I look up to see my only friend going down into the green French waters
leaving nothing behind but brain matter and the woman of his dreams.