

and it was uncanny but this
critic who had spewed vindictive
tirades on a poem of mine
published in New Directions
just last year

I'm sitting at home listening to
Johnny Carson tell a joke:
silence for a few seconds then
a burst of understood applause

when the phone rings and
this vindictive critic

in a sort of apologetic voice tells
me he's sorry about the vituperation
but he was reviewing someone else's work

when something clicked inside his skull
concerning my poem and in a flash

of nirvana he knew what I meant
his eyes were opened and he had to call and make
posthumous amends.

-- Allen Fogel

Miami Beach FL

PATROL DUTY

Four of us are dressed in swimsuits,
sneakers and army surplus knives.
We're on top of a barn. On signal
we jump out a window, running.
We cross a thick, black marsh,
not caring about leeches, suckers
or snakes. We are like snakes.
We wade through and climb a steep
grassy hill. A tall, good-looking
blond and I run lead, fast as wind.
We reach a plateau and it is steep
again. Finally, the wire fence.
Under we go, clipping with scissors.
"Like a World War I scene?"
He smiles and makes bomb noises
as he clips.