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In Jackson Heights, My Father Outsmarted Puberty

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BIBI LEWIS

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for David Lewis (1945-2018)

next to LaGuardia runways, spent his summers keel
against terminal shells, smoking

5 cent cigarettes while the bottoms
of his shoes melted to tarmac.

He flirted with flight attendants who drew giveaway pens
from the pocket of their uniform-mating call

to give him six-digit phone numbers scrawled
on grease stained peanut bags.

& at night he slumped over the shoulder
of the LIE, kept his eyes

fixated on polished stones in Cavalry
cemetery: a Queen's response to her older sibling's skyline.