

Havana Blues · *Henry Carlile*

Tonight I thought of you as I smoked a cigar
smuggled in from your birthplace by a senator

who gave it to a friend who gave it to me.
Why speak as though to someone I could see?

I try to know why fathers leave their sons.
Why it is easy to forget—it must be, when

you've never written me to say you're well—
if you're alive—and that you wish me well,

would like to visit when you have a chance.
Were you too proud or grieved? The evidence

suggests you were, and so I understand
and must forgive. If you would only send

a card to say Hello again! Your father.
But I'm talking to myself. Why bother?

You might be dead for all I know or care.
I care, and yet I must confess my fear

is finding you, not knowing what to say.
I'm talking to myself, a game I play

with words, your face the paper that I press,
blank father, ghost! And if I miss

you now I miss for both of us. At two,
a small imperfect replica of you.