

All Downhill :

[part iv., from *Mahalo....*]

We turn the corner...
 & it's all down hill from here..."
 slow descent, the long way down
 —or short & swift
but downhill in any case.

 I think back to 3rd-4th-grade time
 & the steep Plumb Lane hill:
on the paved part at the bottom,
the Plumb's old stone house; then dirt road
to the top, steeply angled up a dusty slope.

the challenge: who could pedal all the way up
 (muscles burning breath in
 gasps dry-throated—
 off the seat the last impossible
 push against inertia, gravity
 push-pump-push almost stopped
 the rounded crest
 triumph! savored
 in breath & sky
 then turning the wheels
 ready-set-go light as air,
 ("look, ma, no hands")

 we eased, then leapt out & back
down that hill the far vision below
 down & down fast
 faster—
flat out right past
 the old stone house
 & its crooked street sign
 easy brakes rolling
breathless to a level
 stop
 standing up on
 the pedals