

WORTH REPEATING

Dear Atlantic,
Afternoons: I approach, uplifted by dreams of push and pull.
Oceanic nights yield a rich bounty, depending on my needs.

To be wrapped in your petticoat waves meets my immediate desire.
I inhale that extra atom of oxygen. Ozone is addictive.

Lovers we are, though you are fickle and I have competition.
Osmotic conformers constantly seek your full attention.

You remain deep, dark, and mysterious at your very bottom.
I resist a visit to this depth of your soul; it is risky.

I wait and willingly approach you at night when humans have gone.
I stand, lusting and naked, near midnight.

Tonight I ask for you to love only me and the moon.
Forget the mermaids.

Inside you now, we are buoyant and I am yielding.
Your power and warmth envelope me.

Neptune, anoint me with your trident; caress me with your salinity.
You sea me.

You are the only one who really SEAs me.

HOW WE WALKED THE CANAL

This day in August has chosen our hearts
To walk the canal and see it from the start: the locks.

We are struck silent by an unusual sight.
Locks of love in reflective light,

Too numerous to count upon the steel fence
That flanks the bridge to the walking path.

Locks upon the locks: very ironic
Stainless steel promises, love iconic

Blue-Green waters rumble below.
The locks birth the canal from the river, quite the flow.

We cross the bridge; on the path we crunch along.
Flanked by a dendrologist's dream, morning song

For a leaf collector. Pines, oaks and river birches
Join the choir and yield the finest of notes:

This is *Liriodendron tulipifera*: Tulip poplar.
All these part for view of water below.

But truly there's one that dominates the show.
Hibiscus moscheutos: Swamp mallow,

Tall, winding plant with bountiful, creamy flowers
And ruby centers: morning glory imposters.

They turn to watch us like guardian angels.
It's then I feel a whisper, a touch that is gentle.

It's my friend's late wife, quietly hinting
That she is with us, uplifting, deserving a lock of her own.

MY MOTHER'S SKATES

She took me on the ice when I was eight.
Carrying her white skates, and renting me the same.
Her eyes sparkled as she pulled up the laces.

Holding my hand for a long time, then letting me go,
Watching me fall, helping me up. *You can do it.*
She encouraged, viewed progress; and then glided off on her own.

Graceful, splendid, pure abandoned glee
For both her and me. But mostly for her, I thought.
For the first time ever, I saw her as a woman, free

Of *Huyedin, Hungary* and the second world war,
Where Christian girls said, *Jewish girls don't skate.*
My grandmother proved them wrong, but still from afar

I often saw the stress in my mother's eyes,
Of being a *Juden* and the neighbors finding out.
Information not yet shared; not seen as a lie.

Post-Traumatic-Stress Disorder not yet invented
She lost her family in *Auschwitz*; she related years later.
She hid the story so her daughters would be protected.

There is a part of the *Torah* called *parashat shoftim*.
It translates into 'judges'. And in the first three lines
Is a phrase: *Tzedek, tzedek, tirdof.*

'Justice, justice shall you pursue.'
My mother skated on thin ice her whole life.
Finally, silence broken, I tell the truth.

For her suffering, for America, the melting pot.
Where one can succeed, make life better.
But memories erased? I think NOT.