



Image from Grasser-photography.com

Dale Walkonen

How the Air Tasted

I remember how the air tasted in the hills of Crocheron Park
as it grew late. We smelled of dirt and tar that bubbled from the road.
You walked ahead of me, going where I didn't think we should,
inexplicably finding a matador's cape in the abandoned Teller's house.

I remember Myer's woods, crocuses,
I remember looking inside a daffodil's velvet yellow world,
my yellow dress, its scoop neck,
I remember never wanting to grow up
as though it would be some terrible calamity.
I remember when women always wore dresses.

I remember morning catechism,
My questions ignored by the answers given
God made me to love him
I remember the threatening swish of nuns' black robes
and serve him in this world

as they swept along our desks
and in the next big black rosaries,
the clack of the round wood beads.

I remember playing Monopoly, the sound of rain on the attic roof,
having German measles, not the bad ones.
I remember catching a snapping turtle. It bit me.

I remember flying my kite forever into the evening, into the dark.
I remember sneaking out to sled alone in the street,
blue shadows on snow, the cold thrill.

Dale Walkonen's work has appeared in *Slab*, *Eclipse*, *Primavera*, *The Chaffin Journal*, *The Westchester Review* and elsewhere. She is also a painter, mime, and playwright (*Mayday! Mayday!*) and has taught at Concordia College, Sacred Heart University and the College of New Rochelle.