

## ILONA MARTONFI

### The Bus On Jarry Street

1.

Stone walls used as wild gardens:  
roses, wisteria, fuchsia clematis.

Purple crabapple laden with fruit.

The first Sunday of July,  
it was round five-o'clock,  
I waited for the bus on Jarry Street:

A girl in blue t-shirt, white skirt.  
Short cropped hair. The year was 1965.

Miron Quarry smokestacks.  
Factory sheds. Barbed wire fence.

Field of dandelion snow.

I waited for the bus on Jarry Street.

When apart, we had sent each other letters.  
April, I became pregnant.

The weight gain, the sore breasts, the lethargy.  
Sleeping in a room I shared with my sister.

My parents' crowded six-room cold flat:  
Metal spiral staircase. Gray-painted balconies.

View over the Jean Talon Market.  
Copper steeple of the Madonna Della Difesa  
church.

Today at noon, my *fidanzato* came to speak to  
father:

"To make the wedding arrangements."

An argument erupted:  
"Leave!" father shouted.

2.

By bus, I rode across town:  
went to my fiancé's apartment and knocked.

"You didn't warn me!" he raged.  
Left me standing in the stairway. Shut the door.

I waited for the bus on Jarry Street:

I tried to remind myself, tomorrow morning,  
I would be sitting at my desk at Bell Telephone.

Wear two girdles to hide my stomach.  
Tally figures on an electric adding machine.

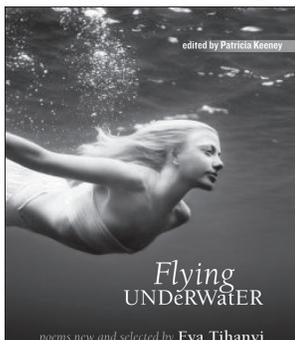
Lime-green chrome kitchen table. Unmatched  
chairs.

Flat brown scavengers. Cockroaches scurrying  
across the linoleum. Mother set the alarm for  
seven.

Head shrunk tight with rows of bristle rollers.  
Saffron tulle kerchief. Cranberry-red lipstick.

I scooped one teaspoon of dried coffee granules:  
poured boiling water. Added two lumps of sugar.

*Ilona Martonfi's poetry appears earlier in this volume.*



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