

Creek Skating

Anita Tanner

In the pasture behind the barn
where workhorse colts frolic all summer long,
the creek, once the broth of stones, freezes over,
greens and blues of creek bed and cottonwood
muted in meandering.

All rivering stills
for the crisp cut of metal blades
on the ice-path
like fingernails scraping
against frosted farmhouse windows.

Upon a curved tablet of snow and ice
our silver runners scrape and flow
like cursive. They skip
and glide, then claw a halt,
fragments of ice ascending in the cold.

What is it that draws us, our feet
huddled into too-small skates
we want never to outgrow,
wild in our breasts with sub-zero air
that hurts down through our saw-blade toes?

The creek opens a window in our body house
to let birds fly free. We are carving our names
on white stone in arcs, curves, figure eights,
racing against spring, another season of growth
liquefying our souls.