

Ellen Steinbaum

Reunion

Looking back, we love ourselves,
love the innocents we were in our sweet pageboys
and yearbook smiles, trusting in good grades
and sports trophies to protect us as we set out
into a decade too new to recognize.

God, how innocent we were, the desperate
coolness shining from our eyes and our
crisp clothes, we editors, the Leader Corps,
the twirlers and the band, the Hi-Y,
stage crew, projectioneers, the student
council members grave with their
responsibilities, and teams of every kind
bursting with heroes.

And did America get all those future nurses,
teachers, homemakers, psychologists, those
engineers? And did our alma mater glorious
leave memories to grow on? For all our trying,
we didn't know that what would get us
here was so much dumb luck and choices
we almost didn't notice making at the time.

No one is unscathed, yet here we are,
triumphant with survival and eked out
accomplishments, humbled by our dreams
and by the years that bring us back. Even
the ones who aren't here are here.

We're all here, all of us. We rush to tell
and to show pictures. Good for us. Good
for those lovely innocents, those beautiful,
serious children.
Old, dear selves, we love
you. And each other.
And our lucky lives.

Ellen Steinbaum is the author of two poetry collections, *Afterwords* and *Container Gardening*. Her work has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and included in Garrison Keillor's new anthology, "*Good Poems, American Places*." She is also the author of a one-person play *CenterPiece*, which she has performed. She is a former literary columnist for *The Boston Globe* and now writes a blog, "Reading and Writing and the Occasional Recipe," which can be found at her web site, ellensteinbaum.com.