

## Carol Tashjian – Three Poems

### Indian Summer

Narrow, sun-striped sandy streets  
Open to a distant view of sea and sky  
That lengthens all the way to Spain.  
Footprints track the beach: five perfect toes per stride.  
Two small bulldogs rush the waves,  
Retreating as the tide spills up the sand.  
We breathe the tang of salt and seaweed  
As gulls call through clear air:  
Their shadows race below them on the beach.  
A flash of silver: small fish shoal offshore.  
Gulls scoop them into their beaks.  
We stoop to gather white and citron shells  
All the way to the black-rock breakwater  
Where river meets sea amidst a jumble of  
Rail fences and weathered shingle houses.  
We rest on sun-warmed stones and talk.  
You raise your eyes to the endless line where sea meets sky:  
*Look, we can see to the edges of the earth.*  
A sudden gust; a thousand glittering sequins  
Across the sunny surface of the sea; and we  
Slowly rise to start the long walk home.

### A Twilight Walk Through the Old City

*After Yehuda Amichai*

*Tired faces of people, like colored lights in the street*  
Illuminate the golden stones and speak  
In the comfortable rhythm of people headed home.  
I stop for coffee, hot, sweet and scented with spice.  
The fresh evening air soaks up the steam and bears it away.  
And now the hooded crows begin to go to roost.  
They come from every corner of the city, flying west  
Over streets and houses, past the Israel Museum.  
With a swoop they alight on the roof of the Knesset,  
Elbowing other crows aside.  
Out the Lion's Gate and down Jericho Road. I  
Look up to the sun-gilded Mount of Olives. Cypress  
Trees rise like black flames beside the Russian cathedral.  
One soldier above the Golden Gate guards the

Valley. Shadows creep up the Mount of Olives as  
I unlock our door and go into the living room.  
Ocelot skin, peacock feathers, oriental rugs and brightly-colored  
Armenian pottery. The valley below is filled with  
Olive trees; palms pattern the hills above. For  
Four months, this will be home. Unimaginable,  
To live here at the center of the world.

## **Burning Tree**

The tree outside my window fiercely flames  
In shifting sunlight under broken clouds.  
Red, yellow, orange, green blaze bright  
But the tree is not consumed.  
A pool of gold surrounds its trunk  
Like a discarded petticoat, heaped higher  
With each day. Leaves spin down lazily  
In the still air. Some catch on boughs and balance  
Until a breeze unseats them and they drop  
To join the pile below. Slowly twigs and branches  
Emerge from lacy finery in sober blacks and browns.  
Soon the tree will be all structure, stark against a bitter sky,  
Stripped to bear the winter winds that blow.

Carol Tashjian has been taking poetry writing with Barbara Helfgott Hyatt for several years. She has a PhD in English from Brandeis University has been active in town government, worked as an enamelist on copper for twenty years and then wrote sales and customer materials for companies launching new diagnostic and therapeutic products. In addition, she spent a lot of time outdoors, climbing mountains, bicycling and cross-country skiing.