

Judith J. Katz

Joy is a foreign landscape

A distant constellation
only visible from light years away
and under certain atmospheric conditions.

A backyard astronomer I recognize
it as a neighborhood concealed
by the blinding light of anxiety.

Like a brief shooting star it is
unpredictable, unreliable,
untouchable.

I do not understand the weather
that brings it, cannot control
its arrival and departure.

I want to peer into
its burning nucleus,
learn its secrets,

moisturize my mind with
its soft, soluble,
salient qualities.

Learn to walk its shores
pick up its smooth pebbles,
sea glass, and driftwood

transport myself to a new
geography in which I recognize
the joy in what I already have.

Judith J. Katz is the Lead Teacher for Creative Writing at the Cooperative Arts and Humanities Magnet High School in New Haven, Connecticut, where her signature courses focus on writing poetry. Ms. Katz's work has been published in *Edify Fiction Literary Journal*, *Months to Years*, *The Literary Nest*, *Ritualwell*, *The New Sound Literary Journal*, *Of Sun and Sand* and *Sending Our Condolences*. She has been a first runner up in the Kind of a Hurricane Press's Editor's Choice Awards and she recently received an NEH grant to study Emily Dickinson.