

## Ellen Steinbaum

### The Meaning of Poems

I never liked the crusts,  
ate childhood sandwiches  
to their brown edge,  
stopped there, left  
tooth-scalloped mastodon  
bones on my plate. "But that's  
where all the vitamins are,"  
they told me. "All the  
vitamins are in the  
crust." When I bake  
bread I stir, let  
yeast grow light  
in salted water, knead in  
flour, flattening with my  
palm and folding over,  
over until smooth I  
shape it--braid or boule,  
baguette or loaf,  
bake till it taps hollow  
at the bottom. I slide it,  
steaming, fragrant  
from the oven, realize  
I've neglected once again  
to put the vitamins  
in the crust.

**Ellen Steinbaum's** third poetry collection, *Brightness Falls*, will be published in September, 2013. Her work has twice been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and is included in Garrison Keillor's anthology, *Good Poems, American Places*. A former literary columnist for The Boston Globe, she now writes a blog, "Reading and Writing and the Occasional Recipe," which can be found at her web site, [ellensteinbaum.com](http://ellensteinbaum.com).