

## Doug Holder

### Spectacle Island, Boston Harbor

I forgot  
how much beauty  
can spring  
from a compost heap.  
From a mound  
of garbage  
that was  
capped in  
in a sludge-filled  
time capsule.

All those  
horse hides  
the beasts squeezed  
for glue,  
the remains  
from Brahmin hotels--  
perhaps fossilized ,  
tattered boat shoes  
float in the muck.

The brothels-  
painted ladies  
lie beneath  
the apple-cheeked park rangers--  
at night  
you can hear  
the spectral laughter  
the pleasure  
that comes  
with pain.

The gulls  
seem like  
winged, mourning  
congregants  
for what went down.

The quarantined  
immigrants  
“The sewers of Europe  
have opened,!”

the headlines  
once screamed--  
those yearning masses  
rail thin and  
tubercular.

The red chips  
of gambling houses  
splayed  
in a final,  
futile,  
last bet...

All this  
on a verdant hill,  
in this unlikely place,  
and the placid ocean reveals  
nothing  
behind its  
poker face.

**Doug Holder** is the founder of the Ibbetson Street Press. His work has appeared in *COMPOST*, *Stuff at Night*, *The Boston Globe Magazine* and elsewhere. He teaches writing at Endicott College and Bunker Hill Community College in Boston. He recently won the Allen Ginsberg Award presented from the Newton Writing and Publishing Center.