

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.