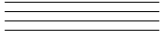


H A P P I N E S S



G R A C E S C H U L M A N

is not a campfire
but an occulting light,
a field of fireflies
that blink on-off-on,

the tree you planted
whose apples
fall to the ground
half-rotten, half sweet,

the street's jackhammers
that fall quiet at night,
the black skimmer's
white underside,

the life together,
apart, together,
the long marriage,
oxymoronic

in its dank joy.
Under a half-moon
quivering
through sycamores,

you held my body
half the night
as I lay in your arms,
sometimes half-awake,

speculating, well,
happy families are unlike.

I choose you
with your handicap,

your half-mobility,
not to mention
your leisure
in forsaking all others

for the chance
of our wholeness.

I take you,
my choice as certain

as plankton on sand
lights up
and arcs to the stars.