

GILLIAN NEVERS

Letter to Dan from Rome

When I have fears that I may cease to be...

- John Keats

I'm sitting in a sprinkle of violets in this cemetery
the other side of the mountain from the trattoria
where we sat last May in soft rain. I'm reading Keats
on Keats' grave in the cemetery the other side of a mountain
that isn't a mountain, but a hill built on amphora.
A landfill of shards, fragments of olive oil vessels slowly
working their ragged way up through centuries.
There is a park on top, but the path is chained off.
There is no way in. No way for me to find as you found,
forty years ago, a pot handle. It's on a shelf in the living room
between the ivory angel and the origami match box.
I like to hold it, trace its rough surface, follow its curve.
My father said it was fake. If dropped in water,
it would crumble. Disappear.

HERON TREE

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gillian Nevers' poems have appeared in *Verse Wisconsin*, *the Aurorean*, *Pirene's Fountain*, *Architrave Press*, and *Wisconsin People & Ideas*. Gillian works with the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets, the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, the Greater Madison Writing Project, and the Road Scholar program on a variety of poetry outreach initiatives. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

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