

Army Surplus 1948

—Liz Dolan

From the window Mama yelled,
Come up now, come up now
after Tommy Breen, rolled up
in an itchy, pea green blanket
careened down the stairs
in his father's arms who cried,
My boy can't move his legs,
legs that a day earlier
had spidered up a chain link fence
to retrieve a stuck spaldeen.

I never saw Tommy again
nor did I swim in the city's pools. Paralyzed
by fear of iron lungs
Mama exiled me to Putnam Lake
but even there polio spread
as if it were revenge for the blanket
of dust we spread over Hiroshima
where sleek-haired Sadako,
her flesh seared, creeped
over Motyagushu Bridge
screaming for her *okaasan*, and later
failed to fold
a thousand
paper
cranes
before she died.