After Watching Jews in America, Part I

Roberta Visser

I think I’m in familiar terrain,
    my living room, my rabbi, the cinderblock and wood paneled synagogue,
but where is my home?
Here, in New England, where I’ve lived for nearly thirty years,
    my square house on cement footings sits on the dark surface of the earth.

I have no horse fitted with leather reins to hold in my hand,
    no mane to stroke, no eyes to speak to in soft tones,
    to depend on for my journey,
unlike Frost, no horse to pause with to view the woods, wonder at its thoughts
    on the road between the neighbor’s white lawn and the low split
    stretches of snow beyond, where the Ashuelot churns as if to speak.

I have no horse shaking its head snorting with impatience
    to keep me in the necessity of the moment
only the sounds of the ticking clock, the rumble of a truck
    snorting its way to a place I have no relation to.

From my window, the tall crowns of white pine are ballerina arms
    stretching up to something only they can sense,
while I listen for whispers of belonging to the strong rabbinic intonations
    of my Sephardic heritage, whose hair-like
    secondary roots I’m having trouble grasping.