

Neilah #1

Ken Seide

The last prayer
I uttered
before Neilah
had only four words.
Help me, God.
Amen.

But the Gates of Prayer
snapped closed
and snipped my prayer in half,
which means
I hope
that my sigh
at least
slipped through.



Neilah #2

Ken Seide

The gates of prayer close, but if prayer is a sermon to ourselves,
does it matter?

The gates of tears close, but a tear can unlock them.

The gates of hope close, but hope passes through the cracks.

The gates of justice close, but there is no fence.

The gates of dreams close, but a dream can float over.

The gates of memory close, but nothing shuts out memories
of the righteous.

The gates of repentance close, but press your forehead on them
and close your eyes; they will open.

The gates of mercy close, but will swing open for you.

The gates of joy, if you know how to enter, never close.

KEN SEIDE is the pen name of a resident of Newton, Mass. His poetry has appeared in *Poetica*, *Midstream*, *New Vilna Review*, *Scribblers on the Roof*, *Ibbetson Street*, and *Muddy River Review*. His short stories have appeared in *Poetica*.