
The Eyes of Tashlich

Shel Krakofsky

mere hours after
 being dipped and engulfed
 in a mikvah of honey
 the apple is now brown and sour

obeying Micah's admonition
 inside out we turn our pockets
 and souls
 pollute the cleansing stream

flowing and scaled
 with the justice of
 cold-blooded fish
 their eyes always open
 nowhere a blink of forgiveness

we use crumbs of leavened bread
 teasing those fish to rise
 to the surface, shamelessly
 using sins for bait

our own necks up to water
 ablution incomplete
 we try to reach Mount Moriah
 for a final thrust of trust

next week we immerse ourselves
 beside the tainted hungry fish
 we thirst for purification
 the fish, for our return

Shel Krakofsky received the 1993 Toronto Jewish Book Award for creative writing. His latest book is a collection of short stories, Listening for Somersaults. He practices medicine in London, Ontario.