

Some roses, you know, take years  
when newly planted, to bloom—  
first they must learn the soil, reach  
beneath, take hold; above,  
a climber must wind itself  
by wall or drainpipe or pole,  
whatever it can find,  
always yearning upward—  
at Bayside Middle School, Olympic season,  
students mob the common room  
where a TV, perched high, brings hockey—  
slash of ice, slap of puck, home, the room  
quiet as mice. Then someone asks,  
“Who is it?” And another, head  
clicked away a sharp second, “Canada.”  
“Boys or girls?” comes the query.  
“Just Canada.”

But the girls, straining over the shoulders  
of boys, spot shocks of silken hair  
tucked under helmets, flash of name:  
DANIELLE, HAYLEY, as the room  
explodes in roar. These  
are the roses of winter, daughters  
of mothers whose roots,  
deep, infused with dirt, reworked  
soil that once denied them  
paper routes and five-man basketball,  
pointed them toward figure skating,  
typing, sewing, away from hockey,  
mechanics or science.

At Bayside Middle School, the crowd  
so quiet one can hear the “fuok” of puck  
into the goalie’s glove, sunlight  
fills the room. Outside,  
roses stretch new leaves  
toward the roof, heavy  
with new buds, ready  
to burst into blossom.