

LIBBY SCHEIER

Elat Chayyim, 1 August 1996

—for Shefa Gold

the Catskill mountains
daven under the grey sky
hills rolling and unrolling before me
their tallis of summer trees swaying,
dizzy

a bright yellow bird with black wings
swoops by
angelically

my friend is ill

i am trying on the techniques
of spiritual experience

chance favors the prepared mind
as does grace

i eat an apple with equanimity
and pleasure
(yes! they can go together)
under the grey-white skies of morning prayer

my friend is ill

birdcalls reverberate in rounds
like sacred chanting
each bird different each the same

my friend is ill

i saw inside myself two seeds, one black
& tiny & shiny & hard

one yellow and soft
shaped like an almost-half moon
or heavenly canoe

enigmatic pod

yud of my heart

if you open will i find you?

i am praying for my friend
praying for myself
and others
those who have hurt me
those i have hurt
those i know and
those i don't
i am praying for the prayer

will you open open to me?



Tamara Thieboux, "Leap," watercolour, 11" x 7", 1994.

Libby Scheier is the author of Saints and Runners—Stories and a Novella, three books of poetry, most recently sky—A Poem in Four Pieces, and is co-editor of the essay collection, Language in Her Eye. Her poetry, fiction, and criticism have appeared in numerous anthologies, notably collections by Simon & Schuster in the United States and Oxford University Press here in Canada. She taught in the Creative Writing Program at York University for seven years (1988–1995), and is presently director of the independent Toronto Writing Workshop, which she founded in April 1994.