Swimming

We sang union songs and recited the Johnny Appleseed grace at that socialist camp, where we made our beds with regulation corners, and floating docks divided the lakefront into rectangles, an easel standing on the shore for tags to keep track of us in the water. Advancement was measured from ankle deep to waist high to in over my head, and then I swam across the entire lake. My reward — to pilot row boats, and canoes. And responsibility, to be a gondolier for a girl with thalidomide arms. Today I move back and forth in a pool in a disorderly place I never dreamt of. Here there's no child's color war. Now that lake like everywhere else may be damaged, the first nature I knew and desired where the summer berries

grew wild

inside their own borders.

Immigration

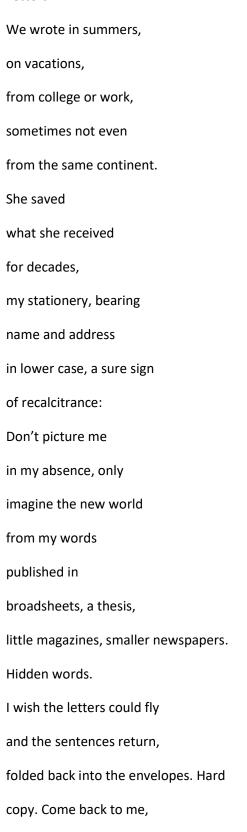
Her German mother smoked while washing dishes, ashes dropped into the sink. But her overweight father. was the one to die first, after they moved, of bad habits. My family stayed in America. But almost by mistake I showed up in the same place, 20 years later. But I hardly see her, she had one kid, I had two, she doesn't have a husband, I had one sometimes. But now she has a disease, stage four, and she wants to give me a bunch of 70 letters I wrote in high school and which I asked her to keep in chronological order. No doubt they are filled with lies and preposterous wishes. I don't want

to remember, I'm here,

that's it, that's all

that counts.

Letters



from those days. Come back,

days.

Magnolia tree

