

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Korean War

By Richard Fein

I didn't know they drafted men at 93, but
Selective Service called me up again, to report
back to Whitehall Street to take my physical.
And now here I am in the same old barracks,
standing sideways between those same old metal beds,
back among all those guys called back in '51.
Looking around, I see Angel Levine easing off
his duffel bag and leaning it against the metal frame,
Angel, born and bred on the Lower East Side,
not Black or Puerto Rican, but Jewish, so named
by his mother on the spot when she was pushing
to get him out of her, pushing and screaming,
Ikh zey a malekh, a malekh. Mayn malekh.
“Hey, Angel,” I shout out to him over the bare beds.
“So you too got caught up in this gorgeous war,”
he hoots back to me over the bare springs,
coming closer, “but don't worry, we're in it together.”
His hip slips toward me as we sway on the wavering spring
and he soothes me, talking to me in Yiddish once again,
over seventy years now back together once again, his kinky
blonde hair nuzzling against my cheek—he soothes me again.