

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Brighton Beach

By Richard Fein

We found a spot, flopped our bags down, initiating claim,
then held out our ends of the blanket, lowering it,
and on our knees tried patting out the lumpy sand,
just a block from the el stop on the BMT line.
Kicking off our Zoris we stripped to our suits,
and after screening ourselves, turned away,
so the other could do our back and shoulders.
As we sat and talked I suddenly saw light around you,
not encasing you so much as shimmering around you,
though whether it emanated from you or descended,
I couldn't tell. I'd never seen that kind of thing before,
though I can still remember it today, around you,
though I never told you, then or later, what I saw.
I carried it home and told no one, keeping it a secret.

I'd often quote Lowell's remarks in his *Paris Review* interview:
"A poet's greatest defect lies not in craft but character."