

Connie Wanek

MUSICAL CHAIRS

The music, quavering and faint,
had somehow kept order among us.
But when it stopped,
everyone rushed toward the lifeboats
where seats were scandalously insufficient.

Why had our parents given birth to so many of us?
They expected us to share, perhaps,
or they couldn't imagine science failing in the end,
unsinkable science, the laboratory of miracles
where mice lived as quietly as they could.

Perhaps the sea would take us all finally,
perhaps the earth. Meanwhile
a tranquilizing waltz began
and we left the safety of our seats. The line of us,
that was really a circle, began to inch forward.