

## Gerald Stern

### HYDRANGEA

I was pleased by blue hydrangea because at  
last I had a flower from a gorgeous  
family I could hate just as when certain  
say Jewish poets, whom I'm supposed to revere  
*because* they're Jewish and not to love them would be  
an act of betrayal to all eleven prophets—  
dozens of kings and clothing manufacturers;  
dentists, chess players, swimmers, stockbrokers, English teachers;  
psychiatrists, painters, physicists, salesmen, violinists;  
social workers, merchants, lawyers, cutters, trimmers;  
critics—reveal themselves as snobs and bigots  
and analytical and anti-passionate which could be  
for all I know another side of Judaism  
since Judaism has three sides as in the  
Mercy, as in the Exceptions, as in the Melancholies,  
which takes me back to the blue hydrangea I see  
between an opening in the fence, it looks like  
the blue was painted on, I hate it, I also  
hate the red carnation, I love the cream  
and when it's cone-shaped, I even like the pink,  
may God forgive me, Lord of the lost and destitute.