

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.