

One Blue Flag · *Linda Pastan*

One blue flag
is the only color left
on the frozen lake.
If the water was blue once
the color has been leached
out of it.
If the flag was once red
it was in another dream,
another country.
For blue is the color I know best:
it stares back at me from mirrors;
I lie gazing up at it;
and when the lake melts
I will swim submerged
only in blue . . .

Only . . .
That word
has so much longing in it:
if only I had done things
differently;
it's only me.
And what does only long for?
A flag perhaps,
that piece of brave cloth
that needs only
the smallest breeze
to give it hope,
even alone —
one blue flag.