**Dandelion**

Julie Lechevsky

My science teacher said
there are no monographs
on the dandelion.

Unlike the Venus fly-trap
or Calopogon pulchellus,
it is not a plant worthy of scrutiny.

It goes on television
between the poison squirt bottles,
during commercial breakaways from Ricki Lake.

But that's how life
parachutes
to my home.

Home,
where they make you do
what you don't want to do.

Moms with Uzis of reproach,
dads with their silencers.
(My parents watch me closely because I am their jewel.)

So no one knows how strong
a dandelion is inside,
how its parts stick together,
bract, involucre, pappus,
how it clings to its fragile self.

There are 188 florets in a bloom,
which might seem a peculiar number,
but there are 188,000 square feet
in the perfectly proportioned Wal-Mart,
which allows for circulation
without getting lost.

I wish I could grow like a dandelion,
from gold to thin white hair,
and be carried on a breeze
to the next yard.