

## The Base

An opaque light  
envelops the base  
behind the gates  
the guard examines the permit  
with care — mistakes  
must not occur

this microcosm has churches  
where those inside may pray  
and a school for children  
who play out their fathers'  
ranks

here chaos draws all forces  
inward to shape a brink  
a system whose parts  
are subject to bumps  
and jiggles from world-noise

and I have come to speak  
about poetry! But how  
do you find things to say?  
they ask, where do you  
get ideas? Miracles  
are everywhere, I tell them  
just look at your skin  
it's a sieve that keeps you dry  
a wrap that holds you  
together, safe, I say  
and feel like a fraud  
or a liar.

INGE ISRAEL