

“Meet more Jews,” the admonition ran.
“Oh hell,” I sighed. This is the last
Thing that I want to hear.

Only weeks later, did I realize
That that one thing would be
My greatest fear.

More Jews—but will they want me?
Why am I this way? I never felt
Uncomfortable before.

I finally am too close: enough to say
“I am a Jew!”
But I shout through a door.

A door I cannot open—things are
Strange inside, a language I can’t
Speak, strange ritual.

And yet beyond that door I hope to dwell.
I shudder at the thought, and think
“Be still!”

Things were so calm only a week ago
I thought I had a path, an easy plan—
Sometimes it’s best, to hang alone in space
Until the inner feelings settle, stand.

By Ariel Cohen