

Getting Past the Mounds

Shlomit Kriger, Toronto, ON, Canada

Rivka slowly ambles
across the mounds.
The foul stench in the air
stings her nostrils.
She tries to not look down.

An elderly woman,
eyes closed,
her ruby red lips appear
to be cracking a smile.
A toddler's hand still
clutching
her mother's skirt.
*Tzitzit*¹ peeking out the bottom of
a black and white blazer.
A red hat.
Tattooed arms entangled
in a search for love, identity.

Rivka rubs her eyes.
The forms seem to merge
until you can't tell where
one begins and another ends.
They become the waves
and the blood the ocean.
Vast. Engulfing.
This is the only world
she knows.

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¹ Ritual fringes attached to a Jewish prayer shawl.