

Poetry Porch: Poetry

We Lived in Smyrna

By Carl Boon

We lived in Smyrna.
Our white walls shone
and their blue trim recalled to me
the cover of my grandmother's
prayer book and her eyes.

We lived in peace
among those who sought Mohammed
in their prayers instead of Jesus.
We ate their bread,
and when the cold weather came

bought their fig jam
at market and their plums, as well.
I remember neither tears
nor mischief on Sunday afternoons—
only the scent of cooked lamb

sifting through the sideroads,
and the familiar fried potatoes,
the garlic and the olive oil.
I remember a boy called Ahmet
whose eyes were lemon swirled

with chocolate. We played hopscotch,
studied each others' faces in the rain,
and promised if war came
we'd disappear
to Spil Mountain together.

But old alliances resist
the maneuvers of youth,
and when September came
Ahmet raised a flag with a crescent
while I raised a cross.