

Sonnet Scroll

Hanging Laundry in Winter **By Denise Provost**

Apartment flats had porches in the back—
not wide, but long—washing lines strung across
from pulley to pulley. My mother washed
our clothing in a tub. She twisted it
and squeezed until she coaxed the water out.

I tried to help. She wouldn't let me touch
this growing mountain of soggy cotton:
muslin, broadcloth, percale. My father's shirts,
my little pants, my mother's home-made skirts,
piled in a cart and wheeled out to our porch.

We put on coats to step into the cold
where snow-dust sparkled in the icy air.
My mother and aunt pinned up all the clothes
which became stiff as cardboard when they froze.