**Play Something that Makes Me Cry**

Diane Raven

I was lured into the music store’s free luncheon

by a photo on their poster: *Steinway and a Sandwich*

I recognized him

he didn’t recognize me

forty years ago

I might have fallen in love with him

I could be mistaken

maybe it was the jazz piano

lately my memory can’t be trusted

today it’s being generous

allowing me the rare pleasure

of remembering fragments

from a time I can barely hold on to

he turned sideways from the piano

scanned the audience with a familiar humbleness

and said, “Is there a song anyone would like me to play?”

with the shyness of a stranger

I said, “Play something that makes me cry.”

he said, “I’m not familiar with that song

I’ll improvise, how’s that?”

I nodded approvingly

what I meant though

was play a song that makes me remember me

when I heard the guttural exchanges

between him and the notes

a surge of sorrow

moved through me like a storm

I felt the floodwaters rising

as his foot depressed the left pedal

the notes as soft as a lamb’s ear

freed me from drowning

in a moment

his hands plunged into the sharp unknown

the high-pitched sounds pushed and swirled against my skin

like an eddy

filling my emptiness

with passion and freedom