

GRETCHEN FLETCHER

CHAIN LINKS

I can't think of any reason
other than to keep the Wolf away.
That must be why
folks flock to chain-link fences.

Other than to keep the Wolf away,
why would they pile up Teddy bears
and flock around those chain-link fences?
This must be why—

why they pile up Teddy bears
and light protective fires in votives—
this must be why:
to ward off death.

They light protective fires in votives
and plug the fences' holes with notes
(to ward off death)
that say, "Don't come for me."

They plug the fences' holes with notes
like pilgrims at the Wailing Wall.
They pray, "Don't come for me,"
and huddle in large numbers to stay safe.

Like pilgrims at the Wailing Wall
they think: The Wolf can't eat us all.
Huddled in large numbers, we'll be safe.
They try to throw him off their scent.

They think the Wolf can't eat them all.
They pile up flowers in cones of cellophane
to try to throw him off their scent.
They postpone their deaths

by taking part in those of others.
That must be why
they make those pilgrimages.
I can't think of any other reason.