

# Ice

**By Gail Mazur**

In the warming house, children lace their skates,  
bending, choked, over their thick jackets.

A Franklin stove keeps the place so cozy  
it's hard to imagine why anyone would leave,

clumping across the frozen beach to the river.  
December's always the same at Ware's Cove,

the first sheer ice, black, then white  
and deep until the city sends trucks of men

with wooden barriers to put up the boys'  
hockey rink. An hour of skating after school,

of trying wobbly figure-8's, an hour  
of distances moved backwards without falling,

then—twilight, the warming house steamy  
with girls pulling on boots, their chafed legs

aching. Outside, the hockey players keep  
playing, slamming the round black puck

until it's dark, until supper. At night,  
a shy girl comes to the cove with her father.

Although there isn't music, they glide  
arm in arm onto the blurred surface together,

braced like dancers. She thinks she'll never  
be so happy, for who else will find her graceful,

find her perfect, skate with her  
in circles outside the emptied rink forever?

*"Ice" from Zeppo's First Wife: New and Selected Poems by Gail Mazur. Copyright © 2005 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.*

Source: *The Common* (The University of Chicago Press, 1995)



Gail Mazur was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and raised in Auburndale, Massachusetts. A graduate of Smith College, she has lived primarily in Cambridge and Provincetown since the 1960s, with periods in New York City, Houston, and Los Angeles. In 1973, Mazur founded the Blacksmith House Poetry Series in Harvard Square. As an activist with her late husband—the artist Michael Mazur—and others, she cofounded, in 1968, Artists Against Racism and the War, and later they were activists for a Nuclear Freeze. Mazur is Distinguished Senior Writer in Residence in Emerson College’s graduate program and has served for many years on the Writing Committee of the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown.

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