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Pearl Grey River with Blue Blue Boats

Patricia Bender
Rutgers

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Pearl Grey River with Blue Blue Boats

On this day, passersby on their way to the shops
stop on the stone bridges.
Some delay visits to friends
and even forget they need to get to work themselves
as they move down onto the river's banks already a-glimmer.

This is the week of an annual graduation celebration and
students move along the Vlata River passing
through small towns and cities and valley farms.
They float by in their small, bright, blue boats.

*Hello! How are you?
Where are you from?
I'm going to call your parents and tell them you are drunk!*
those on land shout.

The students call back *Hello!*
and shout their names and the names of their towns.
They laugh because their parents already know they are drunk.

Saturated.
The silvery river washes away constraints,
any slights and all the sorrows of classrooms or workrooms, near and far,
-- so forgotten now.
Dreams and memories merge into this dazzling current of happiness.
And, the glow left behind by the students lingers long after they have drifted away.

Patricia Bender, MALS, is a Research Specialist in the Office of Sponsored Research at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, Newark. Patricia has taught writing at Rutgers, and offered community writing workshops both nationally and internationally for more than 20 years. A National Writing Project consultant, she founded and directed the Rutgers University, Newark Writing Center (1998-2008). Her poetry has appeared in *Good Foot*, *LIPS*, the *Paterson Literary Review* and *The Great Falls, An Anthology of Poems about Paterson, New Jersey*. She was recently named to the long list in the 2014 Over The Edge New Writer of The Year competition, Galway, Ireland. Some of her academic writing can be found in the *Reference Service Review* and the *International Journal of Learning*, among others. The chapter "Observe, Reflect, Act" which she co-wrote appears in *Using Qualitative Methods in Action Research*, published by the American Library Association.