

Manege de la Villette

In this slaughter yard
turned park, the carousel
is made of animals
rescued from a century
of carnivals—
a faded wooden rooster
winks his one eye
at a donkey who nods
his broken head
but cannot catch the speed boat
that rises, falls, rises, falls—
always just ahead.

My daughter, eleven,
is too big for her poor
earless pig but doesn't
want to know it.
My son, four, a tiny
Patton in his green tank
aims at a pressed tin horse
that's already lost a leg.
But then what's
one limb? La Villette
was butcher
for all of Paris,
the Verdun of animals.
Even the grass
grows a bright
cemetery green.