

JUDITH BAUMEL

## American Lilacs

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I so love lilacs, their cheerful sprigs, their sure perfume  
even the generous rot they toss into the air after a few days in the house.  
Something in the strip of my childhood ground  
grew them so well, so well.  
Better and more to me than the lilacs of Walt Whitman,  
the lilacs of Adrienne Rich, the Syringa of John Ashbery are the lilacs  
of my father that preceded adult failure.