How did you get your foot in the door of getting published? Any advice for writers trying to get started?

First, for me, it was coming out as a poet to my friends. They knew me as an engineer and now I was writing poems. That was breaking through the first barrier. Then, it took me about a year to work up the guts to actually send out my poems to magazines. I started small. I did not start with the New Yorker. I did some research to find out how to maximize my successes and I think that was a good thing because I did get some early successes publishing in very small magazines. And it’s what kept me going because there’s lots and lots of rejection. So start small so that you can have those successes.

Poem from her book “Plume”: "Richland Dock, 1956"

Someone launched a boat into the current,
caught and delivered fish to the lab
and someone tested for beta and P-32.
Someone with flasks and test tubes tested
and re-tested to double check the rising values.

And someone drove to the public dock
with a clipboard and tallied species and weight.
Chatting with his neighbors, Which fish
are you keeping? How many do you eat?

And someone with a slide rule in a pool of light
figured and refigured the radionuclide
dose. Too high. Experimented frying up
hot whitefish. No. No. Then someone decided

all the numbers were wrong. Someone
from our home town. Is that why we
were never told? While someone fishing–
that little boy; the teacher on Cedar Street–

caught his limit and never knew.