

## **I learned Jazz**

I came from the prim and proper—  
the disciplined yet only rehearsed.

I'd only learned the piano classically and  
played the notes of others before me in  
the gridded Chicagoan downtown streets.

Compartmentalized, my mind never intersected  
my soul with my body, my heart with my head,  
Even as all things had their time,  
their place co-existed  
not evenly, but co-existed.

Then suddenly, I began living in apartments that stood  
where only dirt paths had existed, not even five years before.  
The adjacent rivers would flood after three years of drought,  
leading me every day to my job. These waters guided  
my scats, like returning to the innocence  
I'd once known a lifetime before.

*“Shoo be doo bah way beh bah—”*

And the rains would pour,

*“Tall and tanned and young and lovely—”*

and goodness, my soul would flood all over the place.

*“The Girl from Ipanema goes walking—”*

Ms. Fitzgerald's pure cries.

*“And when she passes, each one she passes goes ah....”*

Those evenings at the club  
were when you became smitten  
as you watched me on the stage  
flooding all over.