

ANGELIKA QUIRK

I AM FROM THE OTHER SIDE

I am from the birch, its bark white and grey
split in half, the one that stood
near Wacholder Park, from the wetlands
of the Baltic Sea, I am from the other side.

From the gatekeeper, the clock tower
ticking, watching hands slide
into the crevices of passing days.
I am from the dance of the hours
climbing up when the minutes decline.

I am from *Sauerbraten* and *Borsch*
and *Bienenstich* and Sunday walks,
wandering winds, and honey wax candles
lit on the fourth of Advent.

I am from the amethyst stone,
the feather bed, mulled wine,
and chamomile tea, from ice flowers
on windowpanes melting with my breath.

I am from the longing arc
and the gothic script,
the sentence without a period,

from hooded dreams worn thin
where stones and sculptures stand
peering across covered with lichen.

MY LIFE

Ten degrees below zero at birth,
a city in ruins,
that's what I called my home.

Reciting Rilke and Goethe
and Hermann Hesse,
I stumbled onto words and verses
and carried them with me.

I climbed mountains in the Alps,
the skirt of the *Queen of the Night*,
and at Christmas skated down
frozen rivers.

I rehearsed *Solveig* from *Peer Gynt*
and visited Sibelius' monument
with pipes whistling in the wind.

I still cook *Rindsrouladen*
and bake blackforest cake.
But now I only swear in German.

I pledge allegiance to two countries,
and when I travel across the ocean,
I yearn for the other side.