

GATHERING OF VERBS FOR FINDER'S STEW

From the sculleries of Hradčany Castle, the cookpots of Lowicz,
the stalls of Warszawa's Old Market Square, the small secrets
were picked up like pollen and dusted over time,
crossed on the tongues of women: The ancient wisdom
of dill, horseradish, onion, sorrel and dye-roots,
how to look for fungi under Carpathian pines,
where and when to pluck sweet marjoram on the Wisla's plains.
Endemic wizardry sprang up hot and wild, romancing
nose, eye and palate of peasants blazoned in floral embroidery,
white lace bouncing off wrists, spilling down skirts and shirts
in rhythm of inspired feet accented with harmonicas—
Or germinated quietly in the yeasty warm
of homemade brushes stroking hand-me-down magic
on eggs for Easter. Conspiratorial as spies,
visionary as poets, mosaics of history, Lachian daughters
geniused the hybrid treasures in their heads
and came to a new world with room
for all their saved seeds to flower.
And now, pungently rooted in western earth,
their genetic flavors special the days, the seasons.