

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 on prevailing breezes
and dusted over time. They crossed great distances
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 humming
and homemade brushes stroking hand-me-down magic
on eggs for Easter. Conspiritorial as spies, visionary
as poets, mosaics of history, Lachian daughters
geniused the hybrid treasures in their heads
and ventured to a New World with space for all
their saved seeds to flower.
And now, fragrantly rooted in Western earth,
their genetic flavors special the days, the seasons.