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## Bubbie

Glen Brown  
*College of DuPage*

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## Bubbie

*by Glen Brown*

I can see her escaping Russia  
like a small bird breaking formation  
over unfamiliar terrain,  
carrying her belongings in wooden wagons  
across the Ukraine  
under a roof of vagrant stars,  
sleeping beneath shawls of leaves.  
She bartered away possessions  
salvaged from her hotel  
ransacked by the Bolsheviks,  
giving up an old world to find a new one  
eight thousand miles away.

It was the prelude of a new decade  
and the world lay before her  
like a matryoshka.  
In America she gave up her Russian name,  
and though she spoke no English,  
she learned the language of a new place  
while keeping the old alive.

I feel for her even now,  
coming so far to everything and having nothing,  
dying far from her birth place in Odessa,  
bringing with her the voice of an old country  
that comes with quiet suffering.  
The great war had murdered her family  
with gas and guns, and for years  
she remained silent as a sleepwalker  
about their deaths.  
Her husband died too before I was born.  
She seldom mentioned his name,  
and I did not know how to ask.

I still hear her voice,  
sometimes unexpectedly from my son,  
a voice searching in soft, broken tones  
for the right word,  
mispronouncing a vowel or consonant.  
She would have called him "doll face."  
He is the only one to carry our name.