

Lives Lived

Up from the homeland of memory she rises,
babushkaed and bent,
her exiled tongue crying “*brouček, brouček!*”
as she bears down on me like a Mack truck
brandishing old-country knedlíčky, kraut
and roast pork, sweet kolache and buchta
her gnarled hands array before me
with a stern “eat, my love, now eat!”

Yet across the great chasm of absence
all I can utter in this toothless month is
“I’m old, *babička*. I’ve grown old.”

—Darrell Petska

Darrell Petska, a retired university editor from Madison, Wisconsin, writes poetry, fiction and nonfiction. View some of his past work in *First Literary Review-East*, *Nixes Mate Review*, *Right Hand Pointing*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Verse-Virtual*, *Loch Raven Review* and elsewhere. (conservancies.wordpress.com)
