Trinity College, Hartford Connecticut

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Journey of Bread

Holly Butchyk

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A Journey of Bread

Buttered bread – a morsel or crumb.
At his funeral I buttered it
And made ham and cheese sandwiches.
He forbade the ham
But in the end,
Relented.

Mother’s smile became
Like the branches of a tree
In deep winter,
And Father –
Brooding and silent.

And still, I remember
My small forehead slanted
On the glass
Drooling over delicate drops
Golden and dusted.

Bara – loosely meaning bread,
So strange and inflective.
It assaulted our speech
And left only crumbs
Of Father’s history and
The distant land of his birth.

And the boys who used to throw stones –
I would duck them
And quickly learned
My accent was strange and my name archaic.
I spat them out and distanced them.

Cob – precisely a hard-crusted roll; verb to strike as a punishment.
Father threw a stinging blow
To my ear.
This time, I devoured
The slang of the place
Like flesh by a creeping insect.

Barmcake – bun topped with flour with
Barm – full of ferment and flavor.
I was twelve then and full
Of possibilities and a
Shifting reality as I jumped
Like a lizard out of his way.

I answered him back
From the safety of a distance.
He stood there raging –
Barmy –
And I with new-found courage.

He scowled.
And it again occurred to me
That time
Disperses definitions and nothing
Is ever set in stone.

I contemplated
The excessive explications
And exchange of terms,
And began to like the subversion of
All these generic confusions.

I was triumphant
His shoulders slumped
He looked up at me
His eyes white hot, and he said
God be with you.

~ Holly Butchyk

(Revised)