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## KNEADING BREAD EVERY SATURDAY

Roxana Cazan

Grandmother kneads bread early on Saturdays,  
 And takes some to church  
 For the Eucharist Father Necula drones the next morning.  
 Through the village, the church bells clank  
 Like a tardive train, waking the children up.  
 They dingdong in the air long  
 After the silence spreads over her shoulders.

In her wooden basin  
 Carved irregularly in the section of a log,  
 She adds flour and water, some yeast to raise the dough  
 Like she did with progenies: hers, mother's...  
 Her fingers break the clumps—  
 Crippled serpents around Eve's ankle;  
 They squirm, twist, wriggle, going up then deep  
 Into the white clay of flour, like oak roots  
 Along a trail of houses.

She squeezes the dough as if to silence Grandpa's cussing,  
 As if to forget about tax raises,  
 Or potato digging,  
 Or abominable sun,  
 Her sleeves rolled up her arms  
 Where light spills along throbbing veins.

Sometimes she seems to pull our ears, or pinch us,  
 Or tickle our armpits when she kneads,  
 As if she sees our faces in the pale mixture,  
 Our cheeky smirks  
 When we descend from the old hayloft—  
     Cows lowing warmly below—  
 In the barn where ants chew slowly at its walls.

She's so beautiful and so childish  
 With her Play-Doh,  
 With her funny grunts and frowns just like in her sleep:  
 A crinkled forehead  
 And withered skin around her eyes,  
 Tracing the circles of Saturn,  
 Remain with her after the kneading is done,  
 When she goes to bed in the morning, the next one,  
 When her hands hurt, but she doesn't complain,  
 At least not in front of the children.