

THE ROAD TO SHEPETOVKA

The house stands by, so old. Its skirts
are hiked up from the mud. The shelter
stoops, a solitary wooden grey. There is no
darkness, yet there is no light. And still
the sky is strange... it hovers
all around us, white.

Off the bus,
we stretch our legs. This is the place
the woman barter painted eggs,
and antique trinkets, hidden, maybe lost,
before that time... of trouble... then the war
began. But that would take too long
for her to tell, and tell...

She brings us
cups of water from a well, the sweetest
thing she sells. (And charges plenty.) We refuse
the trinkets, eggs. We cannot tell if she is old
or young, for in this land, only the ancient-born
can hold, survive.

We climb aboard
the bus, put muddy boots aside. We crane
our necks to see the woman walk. She clasps
her coat against the cold and hurries to the house.
The chickens chase.

The bus pulls out
and chugs along the road to Shepetovka. Beyond
are empty fields, a dying tree. There is no
darkness, yet there is no light. And still
the sky is strange... it hovers
all around us, white.

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