

Remembering Klaipėda

Anna Unser

I don't remember much
I don't remember the cloudy weather
or the language barriers
I don't remember the walking and walking
or the plane ride to and fro
I don't remember the flush in my mother's cheeks
as she tried to tame her young children yelling
in English whilst everyone stared

I don't remember much
I don't remember the bus rides
or the beach (there was beach back home)
I don't remember the khrushchevkas
or the adults drinking vodka orange juice
I don't remember the smell—
(or maybe I do, maybe it smelled like oakmoss;
maybe it smelled like my mother)

I don't remember much
I don't remember being held by my family members
that are all named Aleksandr, Sergej

I don't remember any of them, or anyone
that did not show up to meet me
I don't remember realizing where I was,
just that it was somewhere different, and
different wasn't bad, it wasn't bad, not even
foreign

I don't remember much
but I do remember *moya prababushka*
offering me cookie after cookie
dismissing my mother's protests
like most *babushkas* do

I don't remember much
but I do remember *moya prababushka*
rocking me in her arms, swaddled up
in a blanket (*two years old*, too old
to be rocked and swaddled)

I don't remember much
but I do remember playing
on Dania's slide, though we
didn't really talk.
perhaps it was because we couldn't—
words were useless

I don't remember much
but I do remember chasing the birds
on the sidewalk, eating Italian ice cream
on my mother's lap. (Then, *mommy*,
but—*mamochka, mama*)

I don't remember much
but I do remember wondering
if I'd ever return to this place
if I'd ever see them again
I didn't

But I don't remember much.

Anna Unser is a first-year English major from Aberdeen, South Dakota. Post-master's degree, she plans to pursue a career in developmental editing. When she's not dedicating her time to speed-running her degree, she's either reading the same novel she's been trying to finish all year, watching *Dead Poets Society* again, or making yet another playlist on Spotify.