

ADELE GRAF

**SOREHENNA: AS HER, NONE**

childhood flies home in dreams  
to my grandmother's cramped fragrant rooms  
on sounds of synagogal melody

*ne'er a nosh*

her meals brimmed with cool  
pink summer borscht, chopped liver  
toasted mounds, oblong braided bread  
served in sun, her head held high

*sane her, no?*

warming to grandchildren who  
nimble skipped from Yiddish tradition  
she stuffed nuts and pears in Christmas  
stockings hung on protruded knobs  
of her broad split-level stove

*an' her nose*

prominent but eclipsed  
by smiles, smelled blended scents in rooms  
behind her store (paste wax, antimacassars  
humid sills) that my nostrils still retrieve  
from burnished wood when nights are warm

*near shone*

her face, as now, when breezes  
of remembrance flutter over her, ensconced  
in flowered sunshine of some imagined later  
home as full and pleasing as her own

*hens are on!*

Sundays her closed store—  
sole space wide enough to welcome all—  
transformed once guests who'd helped  
to spread her narrow table circled round  
for slow-roasted chicken dinners, children's  
gifts stitched from velvet ends

*earn she? no!*

as she waited for clients  
in her passé milliner's shop—  
pink footstool near her window display  
where her foot on the stool  
then knee in the window brought hats within reach—  
this footstool, later muted beige  
talisman of a bygone world  
now grants ease for my aged feet

*ha, sneer on! or ah, no sneer! (you choose)*

too late to tell her, I can soar  
to where she hovers ever near my skin—  
from her auburn hand-held mirror  
my own old woman's face stares at me  
but after hugs and knocks of intervening years  
Sorehenna's joy runs through my veins