strange tokens of ancestral determination

by Elizabeth Shneyderman

you carry on your back stories of the

end, sonnets of the war , snippets of

the horse drawn carriage upon which

you fled town, and the wolves amongst

whom you lived in the end. you tell me

tales of famine, times of fatal familial

misfortune, and testimonies on how each

little thing went so terribly wrong. but

despite it all, you find the time for accounts

of pure joy, anecdotes bursting with the

universal innocence of childhood, and

adventures of spirit and spirits in the midst

of pained histories. and here with me now,

centuries past and oceans away, you divulge

your faults and your failures, disclose your

mistakes that led to dreams faded away,

and discuss the awe you feel for the present

that is our present. how far you have come

dragging with you the baggage of a

tumultuous life. but know in your storied

heart, that i will save your stories in mine.

that i will hold them and feel them and

shout them off the tops of mountains until i

can understand even an ounce of the

contents of your soul and its infinite past.