

To live with her was to sit completely on the floor,
entirely on the grass, wholly in the hollow
of her crossed legs, utterly in the mud.

To live with her was to sing out all the notes
even if you didn't know most of the words,
to scribble down each idea that sprang at you in the dark,
to recall the exact phrasing of every folded message
you found tucked under your pillow.

To live with her was to suffocate inside

bear hugs padded by soft smothering breasts,
to eat boiled kielbasa with mashed potatoes,
to smell pierogis frying and fresh grated cabbage.

To live with her was to live with all the windows open,
all the doors unlocked, the slugging rhythm
of the washing machine music to dance to,

the living room rug center stage, where
she taught you the shimmy and the polka.
Living inside the sights of her rifle,

Ja mam dobre matka, always at the center,
kocham, kocham, the red dot in the middle of the bull's eye,
Moja matka jest dobra, you were the focus of her undivided
attention,

the direct hit,
the aim of her bullet love.

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