

Illiterate Fish

Poem by David Mills

ILLITERATE FISH

As the Gypsy Kings snap and tickle starlight, your feet summon tapioca ghosts from Lodz' dust. The way doves dress themselves in glass, after mistaking a window

pane for a cloud, my pupils confuse your sable bangs for condors streaking above your eyes' azure skies. We serve each other words as Pavel becomes the net in our singles

ping-pong match. *May I buy you a drink?* The whites of Pavel's eyes back spin with your volley: "*barze dobję*, why won't he ask to make love?" *Pavel don't ruin this.*

May I drink you by the light crawling out of the moon? Due to his tipsy fibs I place a word on Pavel's tongue, esplanade (v): to attempt an explanation while drunk. Another,

flatulence (n): the emergency vehicle commandeered by me--that peels up Pavel once he's plastered by a steamroller for thwarting my chances. This way he wouldn't have to

get around with a lymph (v): to walk with a lisp. At a bar, you mix potions that unbutton tongues, pour me upstairs. The angel twirling beneath the slick tent

our tongues make tumbles backwards through time. Our first kiss flew to Iceland, then ripped the inseam between Bavaria and the country this kiss was headed for. In

Sublice, a Polish whistle stop, this kiss had to show its passport three times. Apparently, this kiss was unrecognizable with its duds: a moustache and brown eyes. Dressed in dark-

ness, this kiss wondered how the night work its way into two men's clavicles, like snow kneads its way into stone? This kiss noticed people staring as it boarded a 10:07

train to Lodz. What's so unusual about a pair of lips kicking back in the dining car? I wonder if you now know this kiss, inches from your lips, hums with all this history? I

carve your bone black outfit from your skin. My tongue appraises your creamy, naked landscape. I'll never have to teach you words like: flabbergasted (adj): to give up all

hope of ever having a flat tummy. As your hands clamp down on my BVDs, I teach you your first word in English, circumvent (n): the opening in the front of boxer shorts.

Wearing a condom, I slowly enter a foreign country where words like oyster (n), a person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddish, are uttered. As we scrub

each other's skin 'til daylight creeps, you repeatedly coo: *barze dobję*. I cum, white chocolate anoints the roof of my Trojan. *Ni spac, ni spac*. You break night; but

moments later you're yanking on me like a poodle too stupid to follow the edicts in your leash. We spoon in Pavel's bed with this yellow Polish-English dictionary snug

between us: our Berlitz Berlin Wall; east to west, woman to man, communicating 'til the sea purring between us burns and flees. We glisten with brief interludes of, *You*

tired? Or answering the door, you learn negligent (adj): a condition where you absent-mindedly get the door in your nightie. I now know *barze dobre* means very good. And

back on the backside of the Atlantic, now my heart is two question marks staring at each other but afraid to come closer, afraid that no dictionary is equipped to translate

two

tongues

that

once

danced

like

illiterate

fish.

1. Lodz—a town in Poland famous for its film school.
2. Sublice—a town in Poland
3. *Ni Spac*—don't sleep