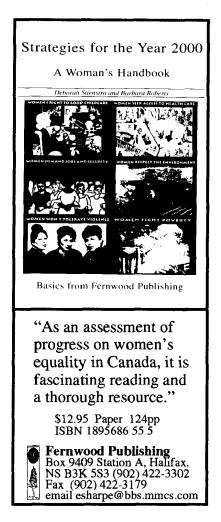
paign for a Conservative Platform: A Chronology of Vatican and Allied Efforts." *The Vatican and the Fourth World Conference on Women*. New York: Catholics for Free Choice, 1995a.

- Catholics for Free Choice. "Distorition of the Draft Platform for Action." The Vatican and the Fourth World Conference on Women. New York: Catholics for Free Choice, 1995b.
- Manier, Benedicte. "When God Enters Politics." *Living Differently: Beijing '95.* Paris: ENDA, 1995.
- NGO Coalition for Women and the Family. The Beijing Platform for Action Reflects a Dangerous and Flawed Philosophy. Pamphlet handed out by NGO Coalition for Women and the Family at the Beijing Conference, 1995.
- The Holy See. Report of the Holy See in Preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women. N.p.: n.d.



ELISAVIETTA RITCHIE

Four Potatoes

"They'll poison you, green," Aunt Tanya warns. "Such a waste.... Potatoes are all one needs for a meal, topped with sour cream, dill ..."

I bought them beige, if pocked and scarred, from the REDUCED FOR QUICK SALE cart, did not shade them from treacherous light.

But I grew up with tales of potato famines, the knowledge that wealth and life can disappear with a drought, revolution or war, so hoard

those holey clothes, expired tinned fish, rutabagas.... Four dangerous spuds, like stones in a stream green round their gills, loll weeks in my chipped brown bowl.

Suddenly now the bottom ends (which side is the top?) sprout rosy goose barnacles: tiny green fingers probe air the way tentacles fathom the sea. A miracle born of neglect.

Might these nascent—roots? tendrils? leaves?—transmute into creatures to stalk the yard, or feed the neighbourhood.... I seize the cleaver, chop, plant sixteen cubes in my window box.

Mudang

Albeit women and of the wrong caste, in Korea, shamans are treated with honour.

They heal, prophecy, exorcise evil spirits by beating on drums and gongs. And they speak with the dead.

Here, poets have similar roles although seldom believed or honoured.

We beat the drums of our skulls, whack the gong into the night, write to dead fathers, lovers, children—

as if they might answer us, as if we could heal any one.

Elisavietta Ritchie's poetry appears earlier in this volume.