

who sits drained before me: "Thank you very much for sharing your experiences. I'd like to ask one more thing before we conclude. Do you tell people about your experiences?"

"No. Well, sometimes, if somebody is interested. But, no. It's too hard. And people don't believe. Who would believe such a story? Maybe you because you are like my children. But how could someone who is born in Canada imagine such a thing? No.... Who would believe?"

The author thanks Sue McIntosh Larsh for her literal eye and editorial touch.

Helen Bajorek MacDonald is a Masters candidate at the Frost Centre for Canadian Heritage and Development Studies, Trent University, Peterborough where she is conducting research on the topic of Post-World War II Polish immigrants to Canada who are survivors of forced deportation and exile to Siberian labour camps during WWII. Her work has been supported by Ontario Graduate Scholarship and scholarships from the Adam Mickiewicz Foundation in Canada, the W. Reymont Foundation, and the Canadian Polish Millennium Fund. She dedicates her work to her Babcia, Wiktoria Rosalia Kotowicz Bajorek. Helen's most recent publication is "Grand[M]Other Tongue" which appeared in the anthology, Our Grandmothers, Ourselves (Raincoast Books, 1999).

¹This figure may never be adequately determined, even if/when researchers are granted adequate access to Soviet archives. I have chosen to use a figure of 1.5 million Poles deported by the Soviet Union during the period 1939-41 as a "middle ground." Anders, Davies, Gross, Piotrowski, Jolluck, Sword, Thurston, and others posit numbers ranging from 980,000 to 2,000,000.

²The book, *Kanada Pachnaca Zywica* [Canada Smelling of Resin] by Arkady Fiedler, was read by a number of Poles before their arrival in Canada.

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ELISAVIETTA RITCHIE

Road-Building Instructions

—for Jessie Elspeth Curtis

Make it straight
through the briars
Leave it dirt
no matter if hollows
hold puddles
I want to sit
on my back steps
shelling peas
stringing beans
thinking poems
watching the child
on the fat-wheeled bike
waver and splash
all the far way
open the gate
keep the geese in
rule cows out
reach in the box
stuff my mail
in her saddlebags
shut the gate
pause to pick
raspberries
bramble—and black—
lose count
then slowly
feet muddy
mouth purple
letters intact
wheel home

Elisavietta Ritchie's poetry appears earlier in this volume.