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## Ukranian Root Cellar

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# Nesting

Lorna Van Gilst

In the gutter  
just beneath my  
upstairs window,  
soft as mud  
in barnyard puddles,  
lies a soggy nest  
of last year's  
leaves.

# Ukranian Root Cellar

Lorna Van Gilst

Three weeks I watched you  
from my balcony each morning  
Carving a little room  
in the earth beneath the chestnuts,  
Lining your cavern, brick by brick,  
sludge-gray mortar oozing thickly out the cracks.  
You set two pipes, one taller than the other,  
to draw fresh air  
over your new potatoes,  
then closed the chamber,  
sealed it with fresh mounds of soil  
tamped down by curious child-feet—  
save for a lidded metal square  
hinged open to the air  
above the ladder.

Proudly you and your neighbors  
gathered round,  
pleased with your craft,  
Celebrating a place prepared  
to receive the firstfruits of the land—

Crisp new potatoes rescued from beetle hordes,  
Large fingers of carrots, packed in soil,  
Bunches of radishes, knuckled and red—

Lined at the root by a jeweled row of jars—  
dark red berries to eat with sweet curds,  
wrinkled apples swimming in pippy syrup—

Memories of August and June and July  
when fresh dill and cilantro graced every plate  
with the green riches of your toil—

Summer's holiday at the Black Sea  
relinquished for treasures buried in dark soil.