

## Wilderness House Literary Review 14/3

*Liz Marlow*

### **Exits**

cities' stale facades crumble  
like stacks of crackers  
roaches, rats got into  
everyone  
exits

on never-ending roads  
made of death  
marches  
cattle cars  
gas  
vans

each pebble forming roads  
represents a lost man  
woman child stars  
become them  
as they  
become  
stars

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### Ivan Samosenko's Pogrom

*Proskurov, Ukraine Pogrom, February 15, 1919<sup>1</sup>*

While Ivan oils his rifle,  
it dawns on him  
that bullets are coins;  
an enemy is a scrap  
of paper for a nest:  
a photo adjacent  
to a date, place of birth.

Soldiers load clips  
slowly. Bullets weigh  
a man down,  
but to Ivan, thrusts  
from bayonets, lances  
are hummingbirds  
feeding on nectar.

As he holds an empty  
glass, feeling vodka  
run through his blood,  
he remembers  
his first kill:  
looking a quail  
in the eyes  
after it fell.

Fear shed itself  
down to pain  
and finally, relief.  
One body warms,  
while another chills.

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<sup>1</sup> During the Ukraine Civil War, Ukrainian People's Republic soldiers, under Ivan Samosenko's command, murdered 1,500 Jews on February 15, 1919.

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German Jews Travel from Genoa, Italy to Shanghai, China via the  
SS Victoria Cruise Liner, August 1937

Waiters, wearing white gloves  
freshly ironed, warming hands  
the way cups filled with ersatz  
tea and coffee warm  
prisoners' whole bodies,  
walk across marble floors  
like gelato flavors swirled  
together in crystal glasses.  
Just last week, some of us  
held children with swelled  
bellies, starving. Here,  
we swell from truffle sauce,  
pecorino, filet mignon,  
and desserts—endless.  
Yesterday, we passed  
a bloated whale carcass. Sharks  
tore away skin to reveal red,  
the way the young  
tear away lovers' clothes.  
Now, life here is wide-eyed.  
Flowers in ceramic pots blink  
open their petals in wonder  
of how we ended up here,  
while waiters water them  
from silver pitchers.  
Then there are memories of life:  
mahogany bannisters,  
pillows filled with goose feathers,  
the piano in the ballroom  
with ivory keys,  
tallow soaps at sinks.