

SARAH
(for my late mother-in-law)

No one knew in her long life in Brooklyn,
even her family did not know,
that Sarah kept an elegant brand of Russian
under a litter of broken tongues.

For her reward, the Yenta's clownish role
and bondage to the scornful inlaws
crowned the youthful years of flight alone,
all Europe baying at her backside.

Sarah's daughter suffered, naturally,
shamed when Mommy bribed the nurse
to take good care of her man, as in old Russia.
But it worked! The nurses *loved*

the money and the costly chocolates.
When Sarah sickened, no one bribed the nurses.