Halb-Jude

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Halb-Jude

We used to eat potatoes
and were grateful for them.
I played in the rubble
of the church steeple.

I was urged to keep
a low profile:
I played soccer with
the boys at school.

The British brought fire
in navy-grey canisters,
which tapped on our roof
like heavy rain.

I watched my uncle’s shop
burning sunset flames,
crumbling to the ground.
A crematorium.

I was told to hide
in the sewers
when their men
came for us.

My Grandfather with
a knowledgable beard and round glasses
was forced to eat black bread
and die of malnutrition.

From our fire escape
I saw the black Mercedes—
I watched them
lead my aunt away.
Two priests were laid out
in the city courtyard,
fleshy holes in their white suits.
They spoke for us.

One crazed man
ran through the square,
and a rising cloud of pigeons,
only to be shot.

Kurt Schenk