

Identity Crisis

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Although I am Russian, I am not *really Russian*.
I am not the essence of beauty wrapped in a kokoshnik

that's dazzled and draped by the porcelain rose
tinted cheeks. I am not the luxuriant judder of

incomprehensible language that flatters
the most eager and soft of ears. Nor am I the

purity of stainless snow baptist robes be to Law,
rather by the Crimson Blood that cleaned me clear.

I also am not the vodka that stings and burns,
but am the Pelmeni of hospitality and heart that

pours so smoothly into bowls of art and wooden
splinters. I am not the composition of art—

encased and displayed, framed in golden petals
that are only seen in my strands of blonde.

I am not the embellishment of a sarafan,
but am the masquerader drowned beneath.

Although I am Russian, I am not *really Russian*
because the American aroma has dissolved me.