

Budapest's Best

Laurel Wiederman-Bieschke

Farmer's Market. We thumb our noses
at doilies, baked goods, radishes—
torhanya calls:
gold nugget nibs of noodles
homemade by hands
that await us—
The Hungarians.

A dash of paprika-red freckles
speckle the liver-spots of
his knowing hands.
Unfurling like the gnarled
knots of tree roots
they knead, fold, and
knead the dumpling dough.

Atop a leather stool his grandson
perches, pinching off dough
for the drying.
Still pinching, he winks at the
wrinkled wad of
ones I thrust out
for the torhanya.

Apple-plump and apple-sweet shines one
Yellow Vidalia while
scores of garlic
cloves hang poised for the undead.
Dice both finely.
Salvation costs
a crumpled dollar.

Bowed down to the mother-herb, we glean
Flat Leaf, not Italian

to be scrubbed clean
until squeak-worthy, until
emerald leaves streak
green my knife hand.
Pepper with parsley.
Don't forget the paprika, lots of
Hungarian paprika:
Budapest's Best—
a squat tin can of
sweet, wax-bodied
red peppers
dried in ruby strands.