

Morning in Freiburg

Noel Sloboda

It can't be love this early

that imbues the shop girls
with such lambent grace.

Behind glass swirling with *Fraktur*

they pay me no mind as I lurch
across medieval cobbles,

my left heel troubled by a pebble

I unknowingly smuggled
across international borders.

One *fräulein* frets over strudel

turning them this way and that
till frosted glaze glistens

like starlight on the ocean.

Another inspects chocolate tortes
searching for blemishes

in sleek, midnight skins.



A third delicately spreads fritters
as if they were bones of a saint

with power to tell the future.

Each tender muse acts
with such care as if preparing a feast

for her wedding day—

cheeks dappled with fire
better suited for nighttime

rituals of devotion. Smitten

by this passion for the perishable
I grow hungry for the day ahead

and as I bend to empty my shoe

jet lag rolls from my shoulders
disappearing into the *Bächle*

along with yesterday's rain.

