

## WHAT IS YOUR JOB, JANISLAV?

It begins with contempt  
or a book

Janislav is blank  
and his jowls  
denote dispassion  
and displeasure

We file along, one atrocity  
after another  
A centipede with  
gasps for footfalls and  
squirted tears for shoelaces

Enamel, wire, horsehair  
leather and glass  
mother-of-pearl replaced by  
threadbare linen

The beading across  
a mule strap that calls out  
for its absent summer dress

Janislav did not vote  
Daria has been telling this  
story for a quarter of her life  
Eva is on Facebook now and  
Agnieszka is ashamed  
Dorocho is angry that  
we are late  
but

it takes time  
to whisper and pass on  
like literary contraband  
the turn of the carousel that  
makes misery museum