

## A SLICE OF STRUDEL

By Joan Michelson

Adam makes the booking and comes with you.  
The view is lake and mountains, Alps that climb  
higher than you've ever ventured. You can't stop  
looking through the window. The next day  
Adam wheels you to a lakeside chalet cafe.

You can't believe it. Done it. Flown to Zurich.  
As you long planned, you order apple strudel.  
You phone your son in London, say, 'It's heaven.'  
He won't listen. 'Mom, you can do it.'  
Say you won't. Please please come home.'

The next day you ring to say goodbye.  
In the afternoon you rest. Adam reads the final  
chapter of the novel you didn't finish.  
When he shuts the book, you laugh together.  
He feels okay. You feel okay. It's time.

It's what you want to do. You two agreed...  
If the day came... If the choice remained...  
You signal to the nurse who's waiting, ready.  
She has your drink. In ten seconds, asleep.  
You snore a little as your breathing slows

and death turns you beautiful as in the past.  
Adam's suddenly breathless. This can't be it!  
If he could turn time back. As if you're still  
alive, he hears your voice. 'Go home to Matthew.  
Bring him a slice of that delicious strudel.'

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Joan Michelson's publications include 'Toward the Heliopause,' *Poetic Matrix Publishers, CA*, 2011. Her poems, fiction, and essays have been published in British Council anthologies, *New Writing* volumes 3, 4, 14. 'Prognosis' was published in *The American Journal of Nursing*, 2012. 'The Next Week' was published in *The Best of Bellevue* anthology. As a prize winning poet, 'Muslim Girl' won the Hamish Canham Prize from the Poetry Society of England in 2012, and 'Daxon Fraser,' won first prize, Torriano International Competition in 2014. Additionally, 'Stories,' won first prize in the Bristol Poetry Competition in 2015. 'Eva Borrisov' was published in *Intimate* Autumn issue 2015. Her work continues as five poems in bilingual form (Italian-English) are forthcoming in *Cenobio* Switzerland. Former Head of Creative Writing, University of Woverhampton, Joan teaches creative writing to Medical Students at Kings College, University of London. An American, she lives in England.

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