

Cold Warrior Matryoshka

Maureen Fielding

On Christmas Eve watch

Inside the Wild West city

Of snow blanketed Berlin,

Surrounded by a tortuous Wall

Bedecked with crosses and graffiti,

Inside the Grunewald

Atop Devil's Mountain,

Surrounded by barbed wire fence,

Patrolling guards and dogs,

Foreboding forest,

And a chilly yellow floodlit glow,

Inside the white Field Station

A bleached St. Basil's

Transported from Red Square,

Crowned with towers,

Radomes round,

And parabolic dishes,

Inside subsystem Delta

In a haze of cigarette smoke,

Surrounded by blinking banks of

Receivers and recorders,

Oscilloscopes spiking,

Seeking Soviet enemies,

Like the final Matryoshka doll

I sit with headphones on,

Listening to the enemy,

Across the tortuous Wall,

A shivering Russian boy on

Midnight tank maneuvers

On the Wunsdorf proving ground,

Soused on Stoly,

Homesick and crying,

My drunken doppelgänger.

Maureen Fielding is an associate professor of English and Women's Studies at Penn State Brandywine. Her work has appeared in *Adanna*, *Westview*, *Black Fox Literary Magazine*, and other journals. She is working on a novel inspired by her experiences as a Russian intercept operator in West Berlin during the Cold War.