

KAREN ALKALAY-GUT

Tyrolean Vacation

High up on Eagles' Nest
I ate sausage and chips,
disturbed only by a strange
inability to utter the words
of a language known to me from youth.
Today the salesgirl tells me
I would find it easier
to pack my groceries
if I put the crate
down into my cart first,
and—seeing my blank stare—
impatiently puts the carton in place
and begins to pack. I understand
everything at once, my fear
of German, convenience, following
orders, packing it all
into one compact box
to take home.

Karen Alkalay-Gut teaches poetry at Tel Aviv University, and since 1972 has lived in Israel. Her publications include a biography of Adelaide Crapsey and numerous books of poetry. She chairs the Israel Association of Writers in English and edits the local PEN international anthology.