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## **Archaeology, Circa 1892: Jews on the Lower East Side of Manhattan**

Here the revolutionaries had their last dinner.  
Careful archaeologist, you can see the traces  
of their loud conversation and warm potato food.  
You can see the Lower East Side  
that they tracked in on the mat  
as they stomped in from the winter.  
The cold scalp smell of their caps,  
their loud chapped hands.

You can see their footsteps,  
but the kitchen is still invisible  
where the women cooked with silent dark eyes  
and short sturdy necks dipped slightly down  
in the careful sustenance of every day.

Their shared strengths lie in the twist of their necks,  
hard and used to damage—  
the women from looking down and in,  
and the men from looking forward.

—*Nava Etshalom,*  
*Eleventh grade, Masterman School,*  
*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

Merlyn's Pen

“

Poetry is boned with ideas, nerved and blooded with emotions, all  
held together by the delicate, tough skin of words.

”

-Paul Engle