

## Homelands

Two languages live inside my mouth,  
neither one quite fitting right-  
English sounds too sharp sometimes,  
Czech feels heavy with my American accent.

I used to think I had to choose.

But standing in Prague's Old Town Square,  
watching tourists photograph the astronomical clock  
while locals rush past on their way to work,  
I finally understood:

Common ground isn't speaking the same language.  
It's knowing what it feels like to be both inside and outside,  
to carry more than one story in your bones,  
to translate not just words but whole worlds  
between the people you love.

My grandmother makes kolaches the old way,  
flour and butter and fruit she cans herself.  
My mom makes them too, but with store-bought filling  
because that's what you do when time is tight  
and you're building a life in a place that didn't know your name.

Both taste like home.

Common ground is knowing that tradition bends,  
that culture survives by changing,  
that the space between two countries  
isn't empty-  
it's where new versions of ourselves grow.

I learned this hiking the Czech mountains,  
where my cousin and I barely spoke  
but understood everything that mattered:  
the ache in our legs from the climb,  
the beauty that doesn't need translation,  
the shared blood that runs deeper than borders.

Travel taught me I don't have to choose.  
I am the question asked in two languages,

the answer that doesn't need translation,  
the bridge my parents built when they left  
and I maintain by returning.

Common ground is this:  
standing with one foot in each world  
and finally realizing  
that's not being torn apart-  
it's being whole.