

Slices

by Dorothee Lang

It was one of the first things she did after they opened the wall. That's at least what she told me years later, more than 1000 miles from Berlin, over a meal that started with Carpaccio and ended with Tiramisu.

Back then, in those new, open days of November 1989, she took the bus to Alexanderplatz. From there, she went to the checkpoint that marked the border of her world for decades. Now the passage to the other side of the city was open.

She walked down the once familiar streets of Berlin, walked down Kurfürstendamm, walked through Tiergarten, walked along the street of the 17th June. And finally, walked into a butcher's shop. Stood there, and gazed at the different kind of sausages.

“And they really are all for sale?” she inquired.

“Ja sicher,” the man behind the counter said, “Yes sure”.

She still couldn't believe it. She asked for ten slices, each from a different sausage, and explained that she was from the other side.

The man behind the counter cut and wrapped up the slices, and added some salami for free. “From Italy,” he said.

She thanked him, carefully placed the bundle in her bag, and walked back. At Alexanderplatz, she sat down on a bench. Her feet hurt, but she didn't care. She opened the bundle, and savoured the slices, slowly, one after the other. She made it as far as the fourth before she broke down in tears.

