

2000

Gwiajtska

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GWIAJTSKA*

Beneath a star that burns in snowing skies,
the pilot light, blue as baby's eyes,
bows to a draft that might be the wake
of spirits feeling through the dark.

Don't make a wish when it blows out—
it's not *your* birthday. Don't kneel
before the oven door left open for heat—
you're not with Busha in a barn that smells

of incense rather than farm animals
huddled by racks of guttering vigil candles.
Don't offer coins that Jesus knows you stole

from blind, old Novak's open till.
Doesn't the Good Book seem to say don't pray
before a fire that can't sear meat.

*A Polish word for Christmas Eve, meaning Christmas Star