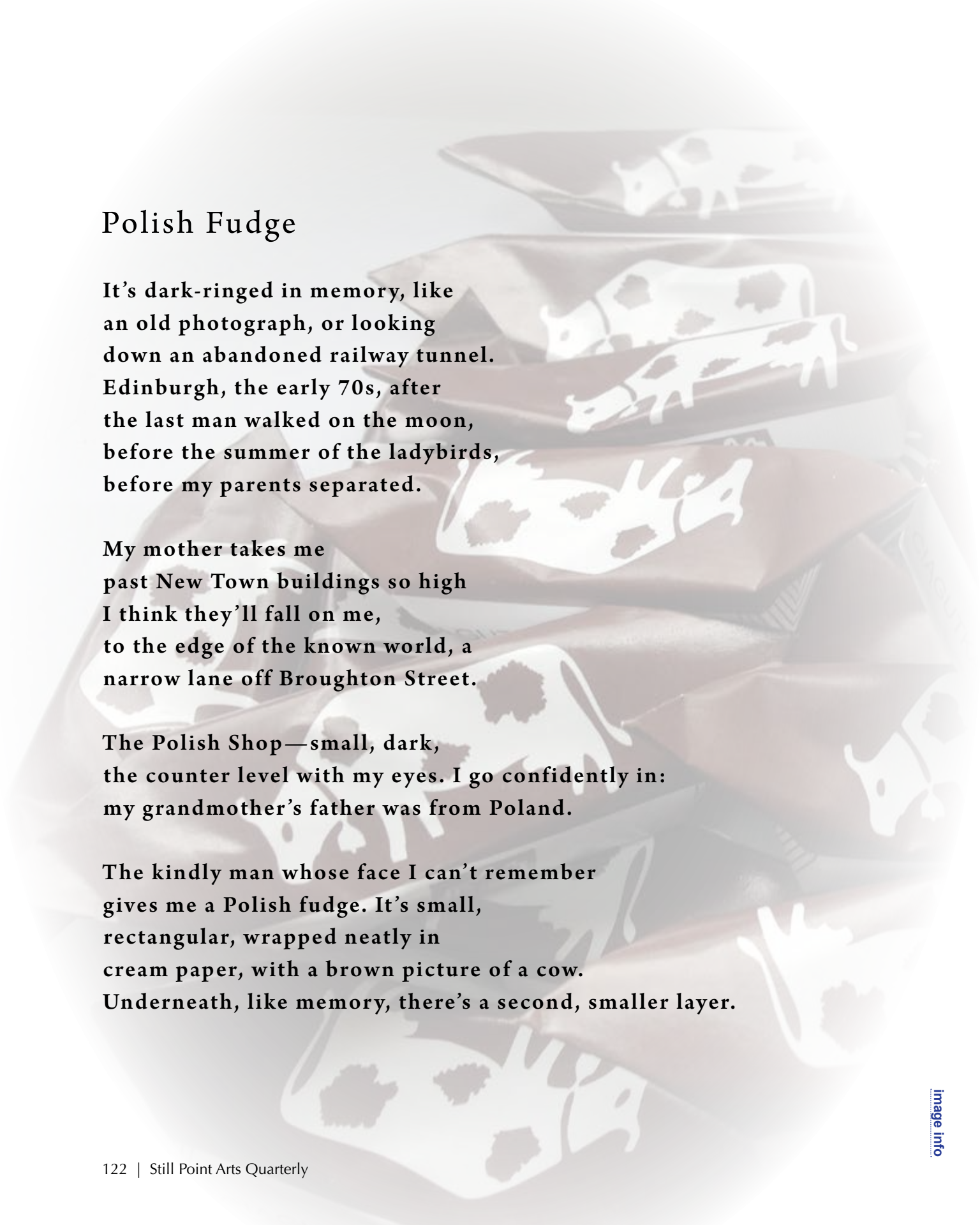




Polish Fudge

It's dark-ringed in memory, like
an old photograph, or looking
down an abandoned railway tunnel.
Edinburgh, the early 70s, after
the last man walked on the moon,
before the summer of the ladybirds,
before my parents separated.

My mother takes me
past New Town buildings so high
I think they'll fall on me,
to the edge of the known world, a
narrow lane off Broughton Street.

The Polish Shop—small, dark,
the counter level with my eyes. I go confidently in:
my grandmother's father was from Poland.

The kindly man whose face I can't remember
gives me a Polish fudge. It's small,
rectangular, wrapped neatly in
cream paper, with a brown picture of a cow.
Underneath, like memory, there's a second, smaller layer.



I unwrap it, put it in my mouth.
It's sweet, milky, sits entire on my tongue for
a second, then starts to soften,
unhurried. Here
there are no hidden currents
of unhappiness, no words
that should be said remaining silent.

For years after when I pass the place
I taste an echo of that sweetness. Then I forget:
there's only absence, and I no longer know
what it is I've lost.

Decades later, I find some
in a deli near the Castle.
I'm jolted by this sudden recognition,
like catching sight of a winter moon
behind the chimneys of North Bridge.

I buy some, cautious, but for once
taste and memory agree. At home,
my older sons say they're too old for sweets
like this, but later
I find my middle boy, hand in the cupboard,
a smile on his face.

— *Antonia Kearton*

Polish Fudge isn't like that dense chocolaty confection we normally think of as fudge. Known as *krówki*, Polish cream fudge is made with milk or cream, sugar, and butter. It's so simple and so good! *Here's a recipe . . .*