

guardian.co.uk

The Saturday Poem

Green Amber in Riga

Sujata Bhatt

The Guardian, Saturday 25 March 2000 01.40 GMT

A [larger](#) | [smaller](#)

for Gunnar Cirulis

The woman on the street corner
was selling necklaces
made of green amber.

Soon everywhere we turned
someone was selling amber:
necklaces, bracelets, nuggets with insects
trapped inside -

But it was the green amber
that seemed closest to the sea,
as if it had just been pulled
out yesterday -

It was the raw texture
of the green amber
I thought of, Gunnar,
as we sat in your house
and you poured the sap from birch trees
into our glasses -

You pointed out the window
your uncle liked to look out of -
the room your father used
to work in.

'This was our home - this was
our home...' you kept on
repeating with such joy -
your feet emphatic on the floor.

Your family home

taken over by the Red Army

**Your family home suddenly
returned to you, empty -
your childhood returned to you
in your old age.**

guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2009