The Enemy

I might have been born in Australia
if my parents weren’t the enemy
after the second world war.
If they’d been allowed to enter the country
in 1950; if they didn’t have to wait ‘til ‘52
for the German-Australian migration agreement.

We weren’t Australia’s first choice
but Australia wasn’t ours.
My father had wanted to emigrate to South Africa,
Canada, or Brazil, but Mum got pregnant with my sister
then the timing was never quite right.

I was born in ’51 and grew up playing in bomb craters,
seven years old when I saw my father thumbing brochures
with pictures of strange landscapes and animals
and a pre-war history of German settlers.

I might have been born in Australia
with the legal name of Mick, not Wolfgang, and
spared the humiliation of the dunce’s cap
in the classroom corner. Bestowed by a teacher
who saw only an enemy in the timid boy
without a word of English.

Deb Matthews-Zott