

UNTITLED ["DACHA: HOT STRAWBERRY CHILDHOOD"]

Inna Kabysh

Dacha: hot strawberry childhood,
pluperfect, near Mesozoic,
the genius boy with the evil gene
stalks a dragonfly, predatory.

An archaeopteryx twitters briefly
on a branch beside the red-haired hunter
and two pears settle in the hammock
just like they would in Mama's sack.

At night the dacha floorboards creak,
an old woman shivers in her chair-
bed, teenage misses are whispering,
currents ferment in their red pail.

At night the joints and vertebrae grow;
like plumping apples, breasts swell up;
train cars depart for far-off spots,
for youth—until the bluing plums,

until September, start of torment—
dacha season: sea and sun.
Our home, our golden mean. Southern
exile: Pushkin, Ovid Nazon.

Translated by Katherine E. Young

UNTITLED ["THIS IS MY MODEL SCHOOL"]*Inna Kabysh*

This is my model school, its icy
 vestibule, its destitute rooms,
 incessantly pregnant teacherladies,
 piercing bells, unwashed spoons.

Walking the corridor, I hear
 a lesson of fanatical song
 and a hushed assembly of Pioneers:
 quiet, quiet, until benumbed.

I see injections, a TB test;
 the Greek profile of a physicist
 (married); the psycho librarian
 beside her pale-faced schizo son.

I see your pointer made of crystal,
 white hand, the geographer's stance,
 the common lawn and a helmet of holes—
 all this dear old, stupid school.

With its large kitchen garden arrayed
 in country style, red poppies, white
 cabbage; school people, the local crazy;
 obscenities, poems, love, and fights....

I see the best students, Natasha
 and Masha, becoming hard-currency
 prostitutes; the pond resembling
 a cup viewed from the clouds, duckweed,

ducks, drakes, dragonflies.... And now
 the last moronic exam is done—
 and painted in oil on the wall about
 our mother: "God! Save her. Amen."

Translated by Katherine E. Young