

Chard de Niord

Pasternak

What century have we got out there, my dears?
—Boris Pasternak

This was the life, to live in Russia
at the end of Russia and write about its history
as if it were poetry, while one beloved or the other
lay asleep nearby, dreaming of him writing nearby
in a high-ceilinged room with the vista
of snow-covered mountains, forests and fields.
More ice than glass in the window frames.
A red coal in the samovar.
Outside, in the distance, the endless rain
of shells and sough of trains behind the hills.
The old world falling to its knees like an elephant.

This was the life, to live at Peredelkino
like a prophet in his own land and dream.
“What I have lost is much too great for a single man,”
he writes in the snow with the tip of his cane.
The shelling has stopped and the world has changed.
The wind picks up and blows the words away.
He writes for the eyes who follow him,
“Nothing is lost in the other world.”
This dark December day inspires him to write
the plainest things in the snow, then walk away.