

MEASURING ANGELS

Today, they gave us soap and cigarettes,
Extra sleep, extra blankets,
Dismantled the cell-block mirror...
What do they think we look at?
Elegant necks? Flirting eyes?

Do they
shiver summer nights?
Fulfill quotas in their sleep?
Nine-hours a day on the sewing-machines.
Five-hundred pairs of gloves a week!
All those Russian hands thrusting
Through our dreams.

Let's refuse their breathing space.
Their fresh vegetables and meat.
Demand, as of right, the Psychiatric Ward!
Re-education is a laugh,
Like measuring Angels
Or counting veins in bloodshot eyes.

Today -I lost a poem.
Like an old woman rekindling love
I couldn't keep it in my head.
Perhaps, losing words doesn't matter,
For with each interrogation
Lies the word.

Yesterday I had my first period in months.
Clearly, my body has no scruples
About 'Liberalization'.
And Tatyana says that in Sorrento
They harvest oranges twice yearly.

So... in my sleep I pick oranges.
Wrap them in tissue-paper,
Sweet and tangy, ripe for eating.