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## Body Language

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## Body Language

by Lorna Van Gilst

Sixty or seventy wrenching bodies crushed inside,  
pressed like grapes to wine  
in one bulging, wheeled vat  
designed for thirty-five—

—Vita, Lena, Inna, Marina—

Lurching in drunken spurts  
through Kharkov streets,  
We feel the sultry juices  
oozing on the surface of our skin—

—Vitaly, Vladimir, Sasha, Misha—

We all stick together,  
a clump of squeezed-out pulp,  
limp and drained—

—Olga, Zhenya, Oksana, Natasha—

*You press your country's weariness into my pores.*

The motion stops, the doors unjam.  
We peel ourselves apart, extract our separate bodies  
from the sticky mass,  
step back to drink in fresher air—

*Lord, press the hope of blood into their veins.*