

Evening in Leningrad

Ленинград вечером

[*Leningrádi este*](#)

As spent bullets spangle a wild boar's hide,
Evening splashes the brickwork like spent lead.
Darkness gathers in puddles. Savage-eyed,
A block of flats stands glowering overhead.

Like a strange beast; the warmth and light inside
Eat outwards, killing as they go; one dead
Cannot appease their giant appetite,
As they climb out and move blindly ahead.

Neon-lights, great yellow teeth, pour down
Their nicotined saliva on the town,
Their mouth burping a slogan from the sky.

Lenin's icon watches with bleary eye...
The smell of angel-piss is everywhere,
Penetrating the nostrils of the square.

Translated by John W. Wilkinson

From [***Selected Poems***](#) by István Baka

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