

## Every Morning

Every morning grants a reprieve  
but sometimes the sound  
is the roll of the drums  
beating retreat, the rifles  
lowered as the sun continues  
to rise, the horses' hooves  
slipping on the frozen snow,  
the dazed men opening and closing  
their eyes, there and not there,  
in Semenovskiy Square.

The snapping of the swords  
above our heads, the sheepskin coats,  
the boots, the imponderable weight  
of the shackles.

There is something almost perverse  
in the determination of the poet who seeks  
his justification at an absolute,  
a transcendental level.

A justification that often appears  
to be lacking.

Not death, not yet dust,  
but the long cold exile  
of a calling.