

Mayakovsky Street

After A Cloud in Trousers

It happened. It happened in Odessa.
I came to Mayakovsky Street
by foot
train
and foot again,
the scholar with no car – what a joke –
but a blue poem book, which drives as well.
A man shook my arm,
torturing an ugly dog on a leash
he told me
Mayakovsky Street was dead,
swapped for a hot-air politician I knew and disliked
(the name rang strange out there.)
Whatever.
Who cares?
Nothing lost, just shrubs and potholes,
a road eating itself.
Gorky once asked how you
yelled at the sunrise each day.
I haven't the fortitude for anger.
Your poems are the sun and yell together.
Mine beg a little rain if they are lucky;
my temperament the same,
not a woman, a cloud in skirts. I cannot even exclaim.
And if I did, there are bigger things:
war, illness, novels, men.
Love, too, but I cannot love a street –
a symbol is still an object, it is the meaning people desire.
Mayakovsky!
Listen, I will write you a poem.