

JIM SMITH

## **THOU, REFUSENIK**

*After Vladimir Mayakovsky*

Yikes, brother! Gromyko's obit was bang on.  
By morning Mezcalin's cenotaph had aged.  
Art thou the enemy? Thy musselman's tenderness  
Makes heaven carve its mansion into apartments,  
Breed robots, our constitutional undergrowth.  
Andreyevich only mocked personalism in others,  
But took out his own teeth. He was my enemy nonetheless,  
Bunkered behemoth, third in order.

Thou, refusenik, come to my death humbly:  
Today Orlovsky heaved the Comintern office over one shoulder,  
Was reported an 11 a.m. sensation,  
Smothered in self-criticism by evening,  
& joined me in this pit by midnight.

1930. The year I enlisted in the army of the dead.

## WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS, PABLO NERUDA AND MY MOTHER

Mom put it best: “Jimmie, you’ve read so many books, you should just be able to put together bits and pieces into your own.”

Nothing thrilled Neruda more than sneaking a figurehead out of a friend’s apartment and adding it to his collection.

I just dreamed of a red dog eating mashed potatoes.

If it had been a red wheelbarrow, perhaps my mother and William Carlos Williams could have finished their shift in this poem, and maybe gone out for a coffee, and soon after fell in love.

I declare her my most precious figurehead. Sure hope Neruda doesn’t learn there is no lock on the back door of this poem. Please don’t tell him, he may carry mom off to Isla Negra where she would be happy.

Perhaps you disapprove, think this is a godawful way to treat my mom. She had a life, and it ended, so there you have it.

But there is so much loneliness in this world, if it were mashed potatoes, every dog in the joint would burst.

So I’ve got to try.

**Jim Smith’s** newest book, *Back Off, Assassin! New and Selected Poems* has just been published by Mansfield Press (November, 2009), edited for the press by Stuart Ross. It contains a wide selection from Jim’s previously published work 1979-1998, and a generous helping of brand new work. This March Jim heads to Chile to try and hand a copy to his one of his heroes, Nicanor Parra. He continues to write in Toronto.