

## Written in the Dark: Five Siege Poets

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Ugly Duckling Presse (Oct 1, 2016)

Softcover \$18.00 (160pp)

978-1-937027-57-5

The depraved nature of the two-and-a-half-year siege of a cultured European metropolis further confirms the Nazis' unmatched penchant for evil. One million citizens died of starvation, bitter cold, relentless shelling. During the war, official Soviet ideology championed courage and willpower, and did not allow any written acknowledgment of the siege's brutal reality. So the secret poetry that was written during those years was hidden away, and only when the archives were opened during the era of *perestroika* did much of the work in this collection get discovered.

Much too skinny creatures  
With pale white features,

With every day, more bitter,  
Their feathers stick out further.

Shrewdly, miserly, they peck  
At the grain, the every speck

That God in His strict passion  
Sends down in strict rations

Like a daydream of a dinner  
To the orphans and the sinners...

A woe-begotten tale they lived  
Once upon a time, as if.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Winter 2017)

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