

Spring 1985

Not Old Russia

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Not Old Russia

Here is my father
with his jars
and tiny brushes,
leaning over
the chipped ikon
he smuggled out
of Leningrad.
He tells me
this Midwestern
light calls to mind
the light of some
former studio, gone
two hundred years.
He hasn't the eye
for this kind of work,
and when he is done—
tomorrow or next week—
St. George will hang
on a papered wall,
wet and not quite
the original color.
We will go out
along Duff Avenue
with our umbrellas,
after snow, and forgive
all manner
of imperfection.
At the end of the block
the big white sign
over The Grove
will flicker on,
drawing attention
to the walnut sky,
and he will laugh,
"That's the color
I was looking for."