Nadezhda Widow

Hiding in nooks where shadows
lay dark as smoke,
little woman
where would you be without history?

Scampering away
from the male furies of the system,
(male, always worse than the real ones)
memorizing his poems
lest they get lost,
where would you be
without the muse-baiters
and the witch-hunters
and the ones who turn
the free word over the spit?

Some people need to be framed
by war and the revolution,
by the war again
and the Cheka;
the face as sorrow,
history as funerary rainment.

Now you are the widow of a generation
the widow of the shadow
of the revolution.
And since you lived
half a century after he disappeared,
surely we could call you
the widow of time, as we know it,
of the black taper-end of the embering millennium.