

Polina Barskova

Air Raid

Translated from the Russian by Valzhyna Mort

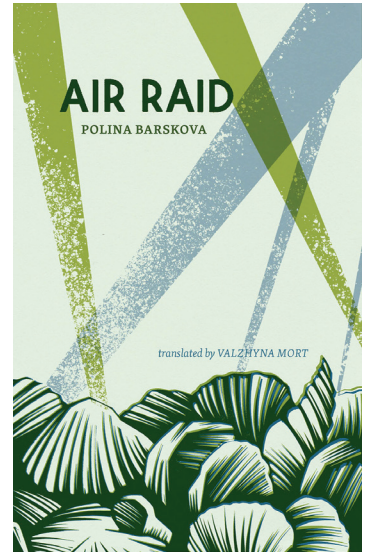
The Siege of Leningrad began in 1941 and lasted 872 days, resulting in the most destructive blockade in history. Already shaken by Stalin's purges of the '30s, Leningrad withstood the siege at a great human cost. *Air Raid* takes us through the archives of memory and literature in this city of death. Polina Barskova's polyphonic poems stretch the boundaries of poetic form—this is what we're left with after poetry's failure to save nations and people: post-death, post-Holocaust, post-Siege, post-revolution; post-marriage and post-literature. How does language react to such a catastrophe? How does a poet find language for what cannot be told?

// *Air Raid* reaffirms the significance of poetry as the historical medium uniquely equipped to articulate painful historical experiences and intimately connect them with today's sensibilities.

— MARK LIPOVETSKY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

// This book casts a spell; it leaves me with an ornament of silences that *emote*—for, as Dickinson told us: after great pain, a formal feeling comes.

— ILYA KAMINSKY, AUTHOR OF *DEAF REPUBLIC*



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Polina Barskova is a poet and a scholar, author of twelve collections of poems and two books of prose in Russian. Her collection of creative nonfiction, *Living Pictures*, received the Andrey Bely Prize in 2015 and is forthcoming in German with Suhrkamp Verlag and in English with NYRB.



Valzhyna Mort was born in Minsk, Belarus. She teaches at Cornell University and writes in English and Belarusian. She is the author of *Factory of Tears*, *Collected Body* (both from Copper Canyon Press), and *Music for the Dead and Resurrected* (FSG).

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