

After this quarter life crisis, I wonder
When did you learn we lost? Was it the Caucuses'
Chill as you beside a cart with your mother,
Three sisters huddled and the youngest
Clinging to your father's
Out-of-use coat?

Could it have been when the little Frenchies
Jeered that the Russian bear couldn't swim?
Or when mom mentioned she'd met
An American Man?

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Grandfather, Dedushka, I want to hear
A dry joke, something about Napoleon's men in the snow
And their dissolving buttons,
Or anything about Oma's proper Dutch face
When she saw you with two oranges
Under your shirt.

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Nichevo strasnovo, indeed, when
We both have become stones smoothed
Under wind and snow.