

# Conversation with Comrade Lenin

– Vladimir Mayakovsky

Awhirl with events,  
    packed with jobs one too many,  
the day slowly sinks  
    as the night shadows fall.  
There are two in the room:  
    I  
    and Lenin-  
a photograph  
    on the whiteness of wall.  
The stubble slides upward  
    above his lip  
as his mouth  
    jerks open in speech.  
    The tense  
creases of brow  
    hold thought  
    in their grip,  
immense brow  
    matched by thought immense.  
A forest of flags,  
    raised-up hands thick as grass...  
Thousands are marching  
    beneath him...  
    Transported,  
alight with joy,  
    I rise from my place,  
eager to see him,  
    hail him,  
    report to him!  
“Comrade Lenin,  
    I report to you –  
(not a dictate of office,  
    the heart’s prompting alone)  
This hellish work  
    that we’re out to do  
will be done  
    and is already being done.  
We feed and we clothe  
    and give light to the needy,  
the quotas  
    for coal  
    and for iron  
    fulfill,  
but there is  
    any amount  
    of bleeding  
muck  
    and rubbish  
    around us still.  
Without you,  
    there’s many

have got out of hand,  
all the sparring  
and squabbling  
does one in.  
There's scum  
in plenty  
hounding our land,  
outside the borders  
and also  
within.  
Try to  
count 'em  
and  
tab 'em –  
it's no go,  
there's all kinds,  
and they're  
thick as nettles:  
kulaks,  
red tapists,  
and,  
down the row,  
drunkards,  
sectarians,  
lickspittles.  
They strut around  
proudly  
as peacocks,  
badges and fountain pens  
studding their chests.  
We'll lick the lot of 'em-  
but  
to lick 'em  
is no easy job  
at the very best.  
On snow-covered lands  
and on stubbly fields,  
in smoky plants  
and on factory sites,  
with you in our hearts,  
Comrade Lenin,  
we build,  
we think,  
we breathe,  
we live,  
and we fight!"  
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the day slowly sinks  
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I  
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a photograph

on the whiteness of wall.

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