

## PETER LUGG

### THE ARREST OF OSIP MANDELSTAM

*And all night long I await the dear guests,  
Shaking like handcuffs the chains on the doors.*

Mandelstam

While your lips were composing  
odes and verses or dreams of fresh bread,  
other lips were reciting allegations  
to bend truth in their strange prism.  
As you dictated poems to your wife,  
your dossier grew like Siberia's trees,  
feeding on a compost of dark lies  
which most were too scared to deny.  
In Voronezh, rumour shut you out.  
So hurry poet, get those words down.  
Soon a doctor and two men in uniform  
will knock softly on your front door  
and talk gently before leading you away.  
After that, you will have few words left.