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Moscow Cinema

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MOSCOW CINEMA
Andrey Gritsman

Through the frozen mud, wind blasting,
plaster falling off the residential blocks
built in a hurry in the late fifties, unlike the movie theater:
sturdy brick, concrete, put together by the Wehrmacht POWs

with their bare hands. Sparkling lemonade in the suffocating lobby
before the show, torture of looking at the girls, giggling, sweating
in their three pairs of pantyhose and thick coats, overhauled from the grandmothers,
staying away from the hoods with sharpened screwdrivers in their pockets,

guys reposed, waiting for the action. We watched *The Crusaders*,
Polish pride at the time, bearded friends of Andzej Vajda fearlessly riding at us
from the screen. In the lobby above us all—Lenin on the huge, dark painting,
standing over his desk, looking at the dusty ficus plant
with his annihilator stare, his hand clutching a tea glass
with the teaspoon broken at the watermark.