

Retirees in the Gym

by Katerina Stoykova-Klemer

Every morning
After the first round of medication
They arrive
With eyes full of purpose
And socks pulled high to the knee braces

They totter from the low back machine
To the chest press
To the leg press
To the spine twist
They silently abduct the hips

They lift the vinyl-coated dumbbells
With their eyes closed
They want to feel the muscles contract
Like slugs
Inside their gray arms
Among the veins and the bumps

They want to picture the tendons
Still attached to the hollowing bones
That will last them longer

In consideration of the rest of us
They conscientiously wipe the equipment
From any old people sweat
That might have collapsed
From their bald heads
Or hunchbacks
While they hobbled on the treadmill
Squeezing the rail
With both hands