

## **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