Susanna Breido During The Great Patriotic War

This picture was made in summer 1943, when I served in the 2nd detachment of the aerostatic regiment, located in the Babushkin Garden in Leningrad.

Memory keeps various things. There is a line for 3 days for bread. People do not leave their place in the line, only replace each other. There is an interruption in production at the bread-baking plant because of water absence.

A truck loaded with piled dead bodies from the Sverdlov hospital morgue goes by.
A dead body of a naked girl with long golden loose hair stands at the truck side, reminding of the Summer Garden statues. Everybody standing in line is deeply shocked.

Once I was walking home, counting the corpses I met, which were carried either on a piece of plywood or on a sleigh. Counted 19.
Why was I walking and counting?

I cannot explain that "blockade state" now to myself. Before the attack on Vyborg "Katyushas" were zeroed in, the military men were finding targets, measuring the distance to it for the future combat.

A group of mortar men, aged 40-45, stood near the headquarters dugout where I worked as a clerk. They were talking and preparing for the combat.

Suddenly there was a casual volley and then nothing was left, only a piece of scorched ground. I still cannot calmly listen to famous poet Mezhirov's poems: "Artillery hits its own people: undershoot, overshoot, undershoot".

After the combat two tanks pulled over at the dugout. Remains of ground intestines on the tracks. The tankers are going to the water and with buckets of water wash off what was recently their own and foreign soldiers.

They are doing it busily, calmly, but how to live with it later on? There were a lot of deaths around and the feeling of fear was always there. However, the shelling and bombing did not cause external panic, they merely killed the nerves.

Not only the living conditions on the frontline of the city-front, but also continuous internal feeling of danger turned us, yesterday's schoolchildren, into grownups.