In Russia

Louis Simpson
"Noontime"—a view of the Battery with masts passing over the rooftops.

Then the old horse-cars on Broadway, people standing around in the garment district.

A night view of Manhattan, light-lines with sweeps of shadow.

"Jumpers"—as they come plunging down their hair bursts into fire.

Then there are photographs of a door-knob, a chair, an unstrung tennis-racket . . .

"Still life. Yes, for a while: It gives your ideas a connection.

And a beautiful woman yawning with the back of her hand, like this."

LOUIS SIMPSON

IN RUSSIA

I can see my mother's family sitting next to the kitchen stove, arguing . . . the famous Yiddish theater.

The sisters return . . . they're breathless, they've been down to the river . . . with their arms filled with wildflowers.

Then, later, night has fallen, and the stars are luminous, gliding above the trees and rooftops.

There's a love-song, an air. And then they turn down the lamps in the old world long ago.