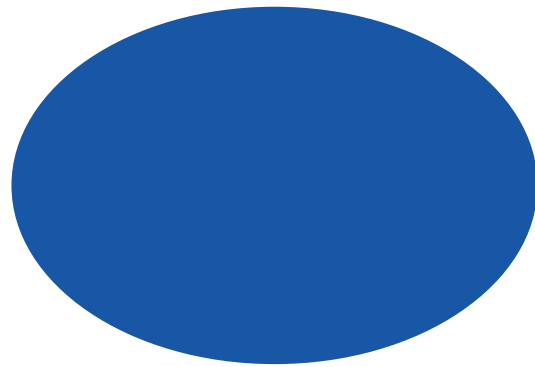


# FOUR CENTURIES

Russian Poetry in Translation



14

2016



Four Centuries. Russian Poetry in Translation  
fourcenturies@gmx.de

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Four Centuries. Russian Poetry in Translation. Essen: Perelmutter Verlag, 2016, Nr. 14

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Цитирование материалов журнала обязательно в следующей форме:

Four Centuries. Russian Poetry in Translation. Essen: Perelmutter Verlag, 2016, Nr. 14

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to *Ms Olga Kushlina* for her kind permission to publish the translations of Viktor Krivulin's poems.

I would like to thank *Mr Dmitri Dragilew* for his kind permission to publish the translations of his poems in our magazine.

*Publisher*

**Perelmutter Verlag, Dr. Ilya Perelmutter, Publisher**  
Erikapfad 7, 45133 Essen, Germany  
www.perelmutterverlag.de, ilyaperelmutter@aol.de

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Letter from the Publisher

**Four Centuries Library**

Dear Friends,

The following text of the Publisher's Letter was published in *Four Centuries*, Nr. 3:

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for reading our magazine.

I would like to open its third issue by launching a new initiative to create a library of Russian poetry in translations - **Four Centuries Library**.

The ambitious goal of this project is to collect books, periodicals and other papers with Russian poetry, old and new, translated into different languages, and finally to donate collection as a whole to one of the university or public libraries. At the end of this issue you will find the list of more than thirty items - a starting contribution from my personal collection. You can join me in my efforts to implement this idea by sending your donations in the following categories:

A. Monographic poetry collections by separate poets translated into different languages

B. Anthologies of Russian poetry translations

C. Periodicals with translations of Russian poetry

Please, send your donations to:

Dr. Ilya Perelmuter, Erikapfad 7, 45133 Essen, Germany

The list of all the gifts with the names of the donators will be published in *Four Centuries*. Thanks a lot for your support in advance!

Yours,

Publisher

In this issue you will find new donations to the *Four Centuries Library* at page 41.

# XIX

Fjodor Tjoettsjev (1803 - 1873)

Фёдор Тютчев (1803 - 1873)

Vertaald door Paul Bezembinder\*  
Translated into Dutch by Paul Bezembinder\*

## Een visioen

Er is, 's nachts, een uur van vattend zwijgen  
en uit dat uur waarin de wonderen ontstaan,  
weet de karos der kosmos vrijuit op te stijgen,  
zijn eigen weg de hemelgordel langs te gaan.

Het donkert meer dan chaos diep kan reiken,  
Atlas kan de last der slaap welhaast niet aan;  
op het onbeschreven blad der Muze blijken  
louter onrustbarende voorspellingen te staan.

1829

Fyodor Tyutchev in *Four Centuries*:

5, 2013, p. 6; 12, 2015, p. 10-11, translated into Hungarian by Mays Tsesarskaya

**Paul Bezembinder**, born 1961, holds a Master's Degree in Theoretical Physics. He is a science policy advisor at a Dutch technical university. Samples of his poetry in Dutch and translations may be found at his website, [www.paulbezembinder.nl](http://www.paulbezembinder.nl)

\* © Paul Bezembinder, 2016, translation

Afanasi Fet (1820 - 1892)

Афанасий Фет (1820 - 1892)

Vertaald door Paul Bezembinder\*

Translated into Dutch by Paul Bezembinder\*

\* \* \*

Kolkende storm in de luchtzee,  
Kokend van woede het sop;  
Kolkende zee van gedachten,  
Kokend van woede mijn kop;  
Kolkende zee van gedachten,  
Stortvloed van drift in de kop;  
Donkere wolken op wolken,  
Kokend van woede het sop.

1842

Afanasij Fet in *Four Centuries*:

7, 2014, p. 8-9, translated into Hungarian by Árpád Galgóczy



Vladimir Solovjov (1853 - 1900)

Владимир Соловьёв (1853 - 1900)

Vertaald door Paul Bezembinder\*

Translated into Dutch by Paul Bezembinder\*

\* \* \*

Horizontale verticalen,  
chocola van hemelgoud,  
Als dromerige spiegelzalen  
In een kersenkleurig woud.

De hete vuren van een ijsgrot  
In de dag der nacht gedoofd,  
Een hyacintgelijke doofpot,  
Ooit aan Pegasus beloofd.

De immanente kamerplanten,  
Ruisend in het dicht struweel,  
De decadente kermisklanten,  
Vastgeklonken in gekweel.

1895

\* © Paul Bezembinder, 2016, translation

*Four Centuries. Russian Poetry in Translation, 14, 2016*

\* \* \*

Mijn beste vriend, zie jij dan niet  
dat al wat zich op aard voltrekt  
de schaduw is, de weerschijn slechts  
van wat zich aan het oog onttrekt?

Mijn beste vriend, hoor jij dan niet  
dat al wat je aan leven hoort  
de echo is, de weerklank slechts  
van symfonieën ongehoord?

Mijn beste vriend, voel jij dan niet  
dat één ding er op aard toe doet...  
datgeen dat er van hart tot hart  
gewisseld wordt in stille groet?

1892

Innokenti Annenski (1856 - 1909)

ИННОКЕНТИЙ АННЕНСКИЙ (1856 - 1909)

Vertaald door Paul Bezembinder\*

Translated into Dutch by Paul Bezembinder\*

### Mijn ideaal

Het ruisen van ontstoken gaslicht  
Boven het grauw en grijs bezoek,  
De stille weemoed in het aanzicht  
Van een terloops vergeten boek,

En dat ik daar dan, onbewogen,  
Als ging het immer wonderwel,  
Over vergeeld papier gebogen,  
Die irritante zijnsvraag stel.

1904

Innokentij Annenskij in *Four Centuries*:

8, 2014, p. 13-15; 10, 2015, p. 6-7, translated into English by Ian Probst

\* © Paul Bezembinder, 2016, translation

## XX

Velimir Khlebnikov (1885 - 1922)

Велимир Хлебников (1885 - 1922)

Translated by Ian Probstein\*

\* \* \*

O *dostoyevski* Might of a rushing cloud,  
O, *pushkin* Lengths of a drooping noon,  
Night looks like Tiutchev,  
Filling the boundless with beyond worldliness.<sup>1</sup>

### City of the Future

Here the squares of halls in one ply  
Are hanging like a glassy page.  
The stone was told: "away"  
When thoughts came to reign.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this poem, Khlebnikov re-thinks and re-establishes the links between nature and art: nature looks in the mirror of art, reflects it and even imitates it. Here "a poetic etymology", as Jakobson defines it, is revealed in the neologisms formed from the proper names. In this condensed quatrain, Khlebnikov characterizes Dostoyevsky's works as impetuous, starting with a Menippean scandal, as Mikhail Bakhtin said, and "finish in timelessness" and "for the last time" (Bakhtin, *The Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, 188, 208); the next line characterizes Pushkin's harmony and euphony, and finally, Khlebnikov speaks about Tiutchev's attraction to night and his willingness to explore the limits of being. Moreover, Khlebnikov freely shifts from past to future, from one reality to another thus making time whole and unified. Jakobson states that "Khlebnikov transforms time present into a whole temporal reality". (Jakobson, R. *Selected Writings*. V. The Hague-Paris-New York, 1981,319) (*Here and further - notes by I. Probstein*)

\* © Ian Probstein, 2016, translation

Rectangles, cubes, and glassy logs,  
Spheres, a flight of fields and angles,  
A crowd of crystal clear honey-combs  
Rests on transparent hills,  
The streets of queer logs are stretched,  
The foreheads of walls are made  
Of icy-white timber:  
We enter the city of Sunnyshire,  
The kingdom of measure and meter.  
Where the sky is spilt from a blue jar  
Held by the hands of a dark plaza's mermaid,  
And a pink ball-round peak  
Is bright as a wreath of grayish glass -  
Go into the night with a scholar's eye!  
Her eye, aimed at the sky,  
Is brightly spilt unto the night's ink,  
It wills headstrongly to rip off the shroud,  
Showing the palace to the crowd  
To contemplate the row of constellations  
And deepen the law of vengeance.  
Where a solitary needle  
Guarding street's angle,  
A glassy way of quietness over peace  
Was a sharp-sighted guardian of silence.  
In a colorful transparent horde  
Old soothsayers gazed from the walls  
Through a golden flood from cupola,  
The sages were seeking the truth,  
Testing whether foolishly or not  
Fathers and sons dragged the net.  
And serene priesthood  
Listened to the noise of entire humanhood  
But the city will cut the blue  
With the book of black planes,  
And a hollow circle of the night  
Will grow bigger and bluer.  
Over the depth of transparent streets

Deep in the heavy glass, inside,  
The rows of sacred faces stretched  
Facing the fire of the skies.  
Having crushed a rude pod of life,  
A throng of crystal clear windows  
Under the balls of cupolas,  
Will tell the dreams of the past,  
The herds of past visions.  
In a high steep temple  
The fathers of the mortal race  
Ascended the cupolas' tops,  
But the windows of their faces,  
Like a net, won't block the light -  
A crowd of people of the covenant  
Stands in the black notch of the palaces.  
Iron fields that move on wheels  
Carrying a sack of crowds, throwing it in one stack.  
A glassy palace, more upright than an old man's wand,  
Throws its axis, alone in black clouds.  
The driving belts of living halls  
Move, chamber by chamber, silver bells,  
Merry prisoners that got used to their cells,  
Like blue threads of glassy glossy huts.  
Illuminating the whole dale,  
A high tree of halls  
Bloomed with its proud crown.  
Like a pipe of heights  
Wrapped with lightning,  
Stands a steeple stalk of chambers.  
Fall down here with your top, fall,  
I will always remember  
The joy of a transparent wall.  
Oh, the wind of the city, move with measure  
Here your seine of cells and nets,  
And here with the pages of a glassy book,  
Here with the spires of axes,  
And here with the forest of strict planes,

Palaces-pages, palaces-books,  
Glassy unfolded books,  
The entire city is a sheet of mirrored windows,  
A pipe in the stern hand of Doom.  
Like a barge hauler with a strap on the neck  
Wearily dragging the skies,  
You throw far away a glassy dale,  
Opening a wide book,  
A clean cut of a vitreous volume of pages.  
And here a surge shrouded a surge of the transparent canvas,  
Wearily piling up a floor on top a floor,  
It poured out speeches through a lion's mouth,  
And grew like a multitude of a mirrored curve.

### **Kruchyonykh**

A little London ghost.  
A 30 year-old boy, in a dress shirt,  
Sharp, lively and eely,  
Glued a pale dweller of stones  
To the Siberian calling in "chonych".  
You catch someone's thoughts deftly  
To lead them to the end, to suicide.  
The face of an Anglicized serf  
Of bookkeeping  
Tired of books.  
Nimble publisher of opprobrious,  
Unshaven, careless, treacherous,  
But the eyes are girlish.  
At times, full of tenderness.  
A big gossiper and prankster,  
A lover of personal profit,  
You are a charming writer -  
Burliuk's negative double.

1921

\* \* \*

A Police Precinct is a great thing!  
It is a place of meeting  
Of myself and the state.  
The state reminds me  
That it still exists!

1922

## To All

There are letters-vengeance,  
My circle is ripe,  
And the snowstorm flutters flakes,  
And the spirits soundlessly rush.  
I am pierced with the spears of spiritual hunger,  
Pierced with spears of starving mouths.  
Your hunger begs to eat  
And in the kettle of elegant plagues  
Your hunger begs food - here's a free breast milk!  
And then I fall like Kuchum<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Kuchum Khan (ca. 1510-1520 - killed ca. 1601) - the last great khan of Siberia, a descendant of Chenghiz Khan. Although he was initially defeated by the conqueror of Siberia cossack Yermak (see below), he managed to escape, gathered a big army, later trapped and killed Yermak and entered a long war against the army of Andrey Voyeykov, Ivan the Terrible's (reigned 1547-1584) general, and Yermak's followers. Later, under the rule of Boris Godunov, Voyeykov offered Kuchum to surrender in exchange for big estates and Russian nobility, which was later accepted by his son Ali. His other son, Abul Khayir, was the first of his dynasty to convert to Christianity in 1591. As an old man Kuchum was trapped, defeated, and killed by either the khan of the Nogai or some other horde in Kazakhstan that invited him as a ruler but trapped and killed him instead.



Pierced with the spears of Ermak.<sup>1</sup>  
 That hunger of piercing spears  
 Comes to weed a manuscript.  
 Ah, to find the pearls of the beloved faces  
 On a street saleswoman!  
 Why have I dropped this bundle of pages?  
 Why have I been an awkward crank?  
 It's not the shepherds' impishness seeking to warm up -  
 It's the executioner of the manuscript's fire -  
 Everywhere is a ragged knife  
 And the faces of butchered poems.  
 Everything that a three year-old year gave us  
 The score of sons round by a hundred,  
 And a circle of faces familiar to all?  
 Everywhere the bodies of slaughtered princes lie,  
 Everywhere, everywhere's damned Uglich!

1922

"To All", one of the last Khlebnikov's poems, reveals his growing alienation from the Bolsheviks and their terror. The effect of alienation from reality is intensified by Khlebnikov's metaphors: "pierced with the spears of spiritual hunger", "pierced with the spears of starving mouths", which can be read in a direct and a reverse order (A=B and B=A). In this poem "a bundle of pages" does not only mean a literary work but also implies history and reality: the poet blames himself for his own prophecy. The complex metaphor "the executioner of the manuscript's fire" intensified by the inversion and redundancy (an executioner who burned the manuscripts) is then realized in metonymies: "ragged knife" and "the faces of butchered poems." The motif of the destruction of culture and spiritual life is evoked in a universal metonymy: "Everywhere, everywhere's damned Uglich!" (the place where Tsar Boris Godunov ostensibly had killed Prince Dmitry, the younger son of Ivan the Terrible) - it is a symbol of usurpation, lawlessness, violence, and destruction (perhaps it is also alluding to the murder of the royal family by the Bolsheviks).

<sup>1</sup>Vasiliy "Yermak" Timofeyevich Alenin (born between 1532 and 1542 - August 5 or 6, 1585) was the first who started the conquest of Siberia in the reign of the Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible. His army defeated the great khan of Siberia Kuchum, but the latter escaped, gathered another army, and fiercely resisted the Russian invaders. Later Kuchum managed to ambush Yermak with a small band of men.

Hence not only metaphors but also metonymies became metamorphoses, to paraphrase Mandelstam's formula. It is notable, that Jakobson uses the term "metamorphosis" in the sense of "a parallelism developed in time."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jakobson, R. "Modern Russian Poetry: Velimir Khlebnikov", in Brown, Edward J, comp. and ed. *Major Soviet Writers*. L.-Oxford-N.Y.: OUP, 1973, 77.

**Velimir Khlebnikov** (1885-1922) was one of the creators and leaders of the Russian futurism, and also its principal philosopher. He invented another name for futurism itself. The futurists were for him *budetliane* (literally, will-be-people), "futurians" - and that is characteristic for Khlebnikov's understanding of that movement and typical of his creative practices. He rejected borrowings from foreign words and invented new Russian words even for new scientific and technological phenomena.

**Ian Probst**, associate professor of English at Touro College, New York, a bilingual English-Russian poet and translator of poetry, is writing poetry and on poetry. He published nine books of poetry in Russian, one in English, and more than a dozen of books of translation; compiled and/or edited more than 30 books and anthologies of poetry in translation; in all has more than 450 publications in several languages (translated poetry from English, Spanish, Italian, and Polish into Russian and from Russian into English). His translations of Osip Mandelstam into English were chosen as a runner-up to The Gabo Prize for Literature in Translation and Multi-Lingual Texts (2016) while his translations of Ezra Pound's Cantos were shortlisted for the Russian Guild of Translators Master Award.

Ian Probst in *Four Centuries*:

- 3, 2012, p. 11-14 (Осип Мандельштам), p. 15-24 (Роальд Мандельштам);
- 4, 2013, p. 14-20 (Осип Мандельштам), p. 21-28 (Роальд Мандельштам);
- 5, 2013, p. 15-20 (Осип Мандельштам); p. 21-25 (Роальд Мандельштам);
- 6, 2013, p. 12-16 (Владислав Ходасевич); p. 17-21 (Елена Шварц);
- 7, 2014, p. 18-33 (Роальд Мандельштам); p. 45-49 (Александр Кабанов);
- 8, 2014, p. 13-15 (Иннокентий Анненский); p. 28-34 (Вениамин Блаженный);
- 9, 2014, p. 19-28 (Осип Мандельштам);
- 10, 2015, p. 6-7 (Иннокентий Анненский); p. 18-20 (Нина Искренко)
- 12, 2015, p. 12-16 (Владислав Ходасевич)

Osip Mandelstam (1891 - 1938)

Осип Мандельштам (1891 - 1938)

Translated by Eugene Dubnov,\*  
John Heath-Stubbs,\*\* and Chris Arkell\*\*\*

**From "Armenia"**

\* \* \*

Here labour appears to the people  
Like an ox six-winged, in its power,  
And with blood darkly venous are swollen  
The pre-winter roses in flower.

\* \* \*

Wrapping your mouth like a moist rose,  
Holding in your hands the octagonal honeycombs,  
On the outskirts of the world you have stood  
Swallowing your tears the whole morning of days.

And you have turned away with shame and grief  
From the bearded cities of the East,  
And now you lie on your chandler's bed,  
And your death-mask is taken.

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\*\*\*© Chris Arkel, 2016, translations

\* \* \*

Bind a kerchief round your hand and boldly plunge it  
Into the crowned sweetbrier, into the very depth  
of its celluloid thorns  
Until it cracks. We will obtain the rose without scissors.  
But make sure it doesn't immediately fall off -  
The pink refuse - the muslin - the petal of Solomon -  
And the dog-rose, no good for sherbet,  
Giving neither oil nor scent.

\* \* \*

Not ruins, no, but the lumber of a mighty forest of compasses,  
Anchor stumps of felled oaks from Christianity's bestiary  
and fable,  
Bales of stone cloth on the capitals, like merchandise  
from a plundered pagan shop,  
Grapes as large as a pigeon's egg, the curls of a ram's horns,  
And the riffled eagles with owl-like wings, as yet  
undefiled by Byzantium.

\* \* \*

Clopping over the purple granite  
A peasant's horse stumbles,  
Climbing onto the bald plinth  
Of the resonant public stone.  
And behind, with their bundles of cheese,  
Just catching their breath, run the Kurds  
Who have reconciled God and the devil,  
Yielding a half to each.

\* \* \*

I will never see you,  
Myopic Armenian sky,  
And never again will squint  
At the bell-tent of Ararat,  
And never will open again  
In the library of potter writers  
The hollow book of fairest earth  
From which the first men learned.

\* \* \*

Blue and clay, clay and blue - what more  
Do you want? Now like a purblind shah who'd pore  
Over his turquoise ring come here and look  
Upon the book of resonant clays, upon  
The book-like earth, the suppurating book,  
The cherished clay with which we're stirred  
And tortured as with music and the word.

1930

*Translated by Eugene Dubnov and Chris Arkell*

## **Leningrad**

I have come back to my city - and how familiar it is,  
To the point of tears, of childhood mumps, of capillaries.

You have come back, then - be ready to swallow down  
Leningrad's cod-liver oil, the street lamps of the town.

Be quick to recognise December daylight where  
Yolk of egg is mixed in with the ominous tar.

Petersburg, I don't want to die yet - you retain  
All the telephone numbers that I own.

Petersburg, I have still got the addresses  
Which will lead me to discover dead men's voices.

I live on the dark backstairs; upon my temple beats  
A door-bell which has been torn out by the roots.

And all night, all night long I am waiting for  
Dear visitors, as I move the handcuff-chains on the door.

1930

\* \* \*

In the kitchen you and I will sit.  
Sweetly-smelling kerosene is lit.

Sharpened knife, the loaf upon its dish.  
Pump the primus stove up if you wish.

Else, collect some string to fasten tight  
A basket for us both before first light -

So we'll to the station get and none  
Ever will find out where we have gone.

1931

\* \* \*

We live, but with never a sense of the country we tread;  
Ten paces away - and the sound of our speaking is dead.

Enough for a broken exchange - and we're made aware  
Of that hill-tribesman ensconced in the Kremlin up there.

His gross pudgy fingers, like clutches of maggots, obese;  
Correct as a ponderous weight each word that he says.

The cockroach whiskered mustachios bristle and grin;  
The tops of his polished jack-boots twinkle and shine.

Around him are his satraps, a craggy-necked horde,  
As he toys with the allegiance that those half-men accord;  
They squeal, or they mew, or they whimper - but he is the one  
That jabs with his finger and rattles and booms like a gun.  
Like horse-shoes, decrees hammered out , with force to apply  
To the crotch, to the temple, the eye-brow, or straight in the eye.  
Each one next to be topped is a ripe plum to pick:  
Caucasian mountainer, with chest barrel-thick.

1933

### From "The Octaves"

Tell me, you draughtsman of the desert,  
Geometrician of the sand,  
Is the lines' impetuous force  
Stronger than is the blowing wind?  
- I am not at all concerned  
With his anxious Judaic troubling:  
From babbling speech he moulds experience  
And from experience drinks the babbling.

1933

\* \* \*

Whips are to redden your narrow shoulders' flesh,  
Blows from whips and the harsh frost's lash.  
Your child's hands are to lift flat irons up,  
To lift flat irons and knot coarse rope.

Your delicate feet bare upon glass to go,  
Barefoot on glass, over bloodied sand too.

And for you like a black candle I'll burn away,  
Like a black candle burning, not daring to pray.

1934

\* \* \*

What can we do with these wide murdered plains,  
The long-drawn hunger of their miracle -  
Since that which we deem openness in them  
Is what ourselves we see, drowsing, behold:  
Still grows the question whence are they and whither  
And is not slowly crawling on them he  
Of whom we scream in terror in our sleep,  
The Judas of the nations yet to come?

1937

\* \* \*

You're not yet dead, not yet alone,  
Who with your mendicant girl can taste  
The grandeur of the empty plain,  
Darkness and cold, the snow-storm's blast.

Peaceful, contended, you should live apart  
In beautiful poverty and mighty indigence;  
Now blessed is each day and night,  
The sweet-voiced labour is all innocence.



Cut down by the wind, scared by the barking cur,  
As if by his own shadow frightened, he  
Is truly wretched, and that man is poor  
Who, half-alive himself, begs a shade's charity.

1937

*Translated by Eugene Dubnov and John Heath-Stubbs*

Osip Mandelstam in *Four Centuries*:

- 1, 2012, p. 9-12, translated into English by Alistair Noon
- 3, 2012, p. 11-14, translated into English by Ian Probstain;
- 4, 2013, p. 14-20, translated into English by Ian Probstain;
- 5, 2013, p. 8-13, translated into English by Tony Brinkley and Raina Kostova;
- 5, 2013, p. 15-20, translated into English by Ian Probstain;
- 6, 2013, p. 9-10, translated into Bulgarian by Maria Lipiskova
- 6, 2013, p. 11, translated into Serbian by Mirjana Petrovic
- 9, 2014, p. 19-28, translated into English by Ian Probstain
- 11, 2015, p. 14, translated into English by Tony Brinkley

**Eugene Dubnov** was born in Tallinn and educated in Moscow and London Universities. He taught English, American and Russian Literature and was Writer-in-Residence at Carmel College, Oxfordshire, and Wingate School in London. His recent books are *The Thousand-Year Minutes*, a bi-lingual poetry collection, published by Shoestring Press, UK, in 2013, and *Never Out Of Reach*, an autobiography written in English, Clemson and Liverpool University Presses, 2015. His poetry and prose in English translation and written in English have been widely published in periodicals in Britain, USA, Canada and elsewhere, as well as in several European, North American, and Australian anthologies. Nine of his short stories have appeared on BBC Radio 3.

**John Heath-Stubbs** (1918-2006) was a major English poet, anthologist and translator with over thirty poetry collections to his credit. A representative figure in British poetry throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry. He was the editor of, among others, the *Faber Book of Twentieth Century Verse* and Penguin's *Poems of Science*. *Collected Poems 1942-1987* came out from Carcanet Press in 1988; *Hindsight: An Autobiography* was published in 1993. As a translator he was widely praised for his Giacomo Leopardi, but he also translated many of Greek, Latin, French, Persian and, in collaboration with Eugene Dubnov, Russian poets.

**Chris Arkell** is an English poet residing in London. He is passionate about Russian language and literature and has been for many years collaborating with Russian speakers to render Russian poetry into English. His collaborated translations have most recently appeared in *The Penguin Book of Russian Poetry*, 2015. His work with Eugene Dubnov has produced English versions of Lomonosov and Mandelstam.

Victor Krivulin (1944 - 2001)  
Виктор Кривулин (1944 - 2001)

From "New Trocheiamb"  
Translated by Tatiana Bonch-Osmolovskaya\*

### **View of the Native Village**

sit down dumbass on a hillock  
write dumbass this landscape  
of Kierkegaardshire your native village  
after screaming and fights  
chaos and outrage here reign

I sit write read Kant  
of raspberry colour. On the pants,  
land map blisters and speckles -  
royal banners, continuous propaganda  
of private life within four walls

women with cotton wool, men with weapons  
they keep saying bye bye bye  
my native village my beluga caviar  
once it was a sturgeon land

© Victor Krivulin, Виктор Кривулин  
\*© Tatiana Bonch-Osmolovskaya, translation, 2016

## **Around**

Around Kuokkala  
falcons don't fly:  
no matter how you call upon them -  
they don't live in ruins,  
where a frog croaked,  
where an owl hooted...

Nothing is high there -  
neither stars nor stalin.  
And for whom is Kuokkala? -  
a cat has meowed -  
and for what is Kuokkala,  
if there is no bogeyman  
neither about nor around?

## **Dollar on a Lamppost**

dark Great Russians -  
nowhere worse to go -  
at subway sell roses  
frozen to the bones:  
"A dollar, mother hacking!"  
the dollar fed and hardened  
with the muzzle of a drunken fitter  
among the maddened crowds  
climbs to a lamppost  
- Mate, and will the light come soon?  
he smiles triumphantly from the top  
ascended to the heaven  
this implausible eagle  
or - what is it? - a peregrine:  
"It will come - don't fret, a kid..."

### **Let's Sit and Talk**

Let's sit down, and, well, talk:  
who is robbed who is starving  
who left to warm up in rome  
who went for matches to the neighbours  
went out and disappeared - after him

another was sent - but  
did not return either... No worries,  
soon there will be summer. They will come to us  
for the science of speech

as if to some greece  
where they know how to be quiet,  
pouring and wishing for  
all kinds of grace

### **Let It Be Someone**

let it be someone good  
who would come to us and say:  
it is not scary to live life is shorter  
than sunbeam bouncing

from mirrows... why are you  
turning back  
once they took banks and post offices  
train station is taken - what did you expect from them

let them take and sort  
but as soon as windows are opened -  
immediately harps will play  
and guitars will ring

## Let It Be Someone Good

let it be someone good  
who would come to us and say:  
it is not scary to live... life - in short -  
is not a road but a station

the place where we bummed  
between women between columns  
half dead music  
in loudspeaker  
stuck

but time! time  
rushes headlong  
to the whistle-stop forgotten by everyone  
there is only one majestic

monument under the sheets  
either it was not uncovered yet  
or captured by a cloud  
of snow took behind the clouds

and moonlit platforms  
beside its plinth  
are so deserted so spacious  
lying so for no one

that a chilled guardian  
under a shameful lamp  
will be found as a bribe  
given to us in secret

### **Stars Are Not the Limit**

in the darkness torn by light  
are the eyes ever begging  
do they roam nude over slippery objects  
bumping into faces, corners, images  
dropping into flickering, which is not identified at once...  
you would think too late: tracer and dotted light line  
of flaks over the fields of Kosovo  
thank God not directly over your head

And ears ring... And in the spills of a distant siren  
as if the heavenly racket began to sing  
he grabs you he throws you head-first at walls -  
just stars from your eyes. But even the stars are not the limit

### **Where is Our New Tolstoy?**

it is strange already two wars  
have passed, and a third is on its way  
but there is no Tolstoy  
neither in body nor in nature

there is his bike  
his Remington and phonograph  
so many places - living and wet  
the same oak or buffet

but emotional depths  
were taken away from us  
to Rio or to Caracas  
into African jungles

an ensign having lived through afghan  
would he ever write something  
he is squeezed by life to death  
and stoned if not drunk

or I see it in a nightmare -  
a lieutenant of special forces  
who worked hard in chechnya  
is suffering: *Phrase cannot be set*  
*Thought does not walk the string*

### **A Stuffed Sonnet**

A ruddy pie with boss  
people with unfed knife  
with squeaking army belts  
will come will run will devour

and now inside us lives  
the understanding that we defended  
the power of the stomach - and the stomach itself  
as shostakovich on a grand piano

plays for you not tutti-frutti  
but march march march forward  
and loudly beats the drums

and if so - what is the sonnet for  
where connected *yes* and *no*  
were in vain built and mercilessly rhymed  
by fathers - the manufacturers of victories

### **The Fate of a Poet**

In youth, he was a poet  
Now he is a priest burdened  
with children and his own house  
without TV. Children learned about "The highlander" movie  
only in classroom, during the lessons of the law  
of God, only in a whisper. The whisper turned out to be  
a thunder

War is conducted in the mountains. Airplanes,  
they say, are useless. From there, people come  
with faces of half-killed birds of prey  
and whisper with their father and praise the jam of red  
currant but leave on a platter  
mountains of cigarette butts. And until morning,  
the names of European capitals  
under the low ceiling  
hang in blue smoke  
in the house without TV but with vegetable and fruit gardens

### **Highlander**

not anyone will get head in the clouds over the balkans  
unpunished - and for two  
one land is not enough, and for one man  
it is as a pellet for an elephant  
all this world with its clouds and its wild  
dogs in the villages  
abandoned by people  
without sending anyone as replacement



## The Poems After Poems

The poems after poems, they look like poems  
and not like poems  
there is a smell of threadbare skin from them  
of heated metal - well, so what,

not write anymore? You'll die of boredom!  
They will put a stone with the inscription: "*Passer-by,  
stop at this grave,  
it is all rotten, and for the appeal "O Lord"*

*there is no strong rhyme, neither skillful hand,  
neither opened mouth - so at least close the eyes."*

In the distance, Chechens and Aztecs rumble

and here it is white and quiet as in a chemistry -  
one moment vials tinkle on the counter  
another, a coin slips and rolls

across the tiles - but where to?! It landed on head  
in the corner where the glory where the victorious thunder  
rattle in verses in season and out of season

**Tatiana Bonch-Osmolovskaya** is a writer and an artist with a strong natural science background. She was born in Simpheropol (Crimea) and studied physics at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology and philology at Moscow State Humanitarian University. She received a PhD degree from the University of New South Wales, Australia, in the area of contemporary Russian experimental poetry. She is author of ten books of prose, poetry and translation including *Introduction to the Literature of Formal Restrictions* (Samara: Bakhrakh-M, 2009), *Idti Legko* (New York: Stosvet Press, 2011), and *Istoki Istiny* (Moscow: Art-Haus Media, 2015) - all in Russian. She co-edited *Freedom of Restriction* anthology (in Russian). Her poetry in English appeared in a number of anthologies and journals. She is also a researcher and organizer of cultural projects.

## XXI

Дмитро Драгільов  
Дмитрий Драгилёв

Українською переклав Сергій Дзюба\*  
Translated into Ukrainian by Sergei Dziuba\*

### З кучерських пісень II

*"Кого ж Ви любите більше...?"*

*І. Д. Якушкін*

Стихне соло випадкових зірок,  
Стомлених скель - запізнiла завiса.  
Повiтря вiршами - неначе кров...  
Я даремно (хлiбним) пестив нутро,  
Полоскав i скиглив, мов звiв курок, -  
Всi стежки зчорнiли до бiса!

Снiг, як пiд арештом, скис молоком,  
Перiщить дощ... I де ж той мир у душi?  
Може, вигадав бог, наче вiршi,  
Лagiдний шурхiт твоiх пiдошов?  
Нi, ввi снi Евридики спiвали знов...  
Отже, старець правий? Чи дощi?

Спить Еол, i мiсто звикло давно.  
Навiщо шукати незнане небо,  
Катати шарнiри болiсних слiв?  
Авжеж, яка у цьому потреба?..  
Все-одно майбутнього бродить вино,  
Кипить i б'ється серцями дощiв.

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\*\*© Сергій Дзюба, Sergei Dziuba, translation, 2016

Капітане, це - топос, не (пар)теся...  
На Ексампей - екіпаж парокінний;  
І свято весни марнується вкотре,  
Як щось надто знайоме, зужите...  
Тісмень - в законі, і буде корпіти,  
Пробиратись кудись в ботаніку - чортом.

А поки підшипник чи ця обручка  
Пливе самотньо в спекотний Алжир  
Без сватів і гінців до обіду, -  
Куций піар, не поручкатись щиро!  
Лакуни, мов Гогенцоллерн чи інжир,  
Тебе кваплять жити: пароль - цоб цобе,  
Ніби пропуск до Холодного Яру - за віру.

Я люблю її сильно. Так Римський зміг -  
Спрагло хвалив ці примхливі моря,  
І наказував Беркін очами,  
І Зігфрід сумував за лісами  
Дрімучими. Вікна вночі горять.  
Білий, незайманий сніг.

### Каменські мотиви

*грай, Адель, не знай печалі*  
О. С. Пушкін  
*...auf uns nimmt im Grunde kaum einer Rücksicht\**  
Beate Zieris

Ось і твоя вулиця святкує, Адельхайд.  
Грудень - місяць зміни поміщика, до речі.  
Спиться ліпше з морозами, не макабр, свічок не  
пали, нехай...  
Й облиш під вечір подумки лічити овечок.

*\*Нас, по суті, майже ніхто не сприймає всерйоз (нім.)*

У грудні настає черга, Адельхайд.  
Почерк зіпсувався раніше, не кажу про характер;  
Раптом наступає на п'яти, настає із затертих теорій,  
забутих практик...  
У "Молодшій Едді" себе не знаходить скальд.

Ялинки немає, костур лежить серед двору -  
Безпечний, та, мабуть, неістівний, недобрий...  
Можна ритми південні, брудні, обирати з горя, -  
Від танго до пасадобля.

Для плезиру - подробиці, застаріле "всупереч",  
балачки про секс...  
Хлопчик воює в компі, йому б чогось пожерти!  
Атласною шкірою дрижить секстакорд десь,  
Голосним безударним здається знову - до смерті.

\* \* \*

Курси біля парку Шевченка - тихенько,  
Кірха - навпроти тисяч дрібниць.  
Увечері - без окулярів, лиць (безкозирка - не козир),  
без ліхтарів,  
Без квітів для джазових москвичів...  
Дим і пара - з дверей,  
І черешня... Та скарги для лікарів - чи не крейзі?  
А потім знову - за чимось у черзі.

Багато в кварталі макулатури - з минулим,  
І мішок назвали по-вуличному - sack,\* теж робота, -  
Кіт в мішку заміщає кота у чоботях,  
Хоч ні біса не тямить у цих собачих речах, мудро.  
А де ж полкан, старий шкет, де на вас найшла ця шиза?  
Хай гроза не гаркавить розрядами на зигзаг, -  
Сплять Амур та Аму-Дар'я.

\*Мішок (нім.)

Спить Самара традицій і Тясмин тасує сни,  
Та вві сні крутиш, наче вусатий кіт, па-де-де...  
Знавіснів - миготить у польоті твоє трико навесні:  
Ось ти - в чешках, панчохах, трапеція бозна де,  
Аж на ріжках у місяця - хрін впаде!

Всю цю купу подробиць треба збагнути разом,  
Не згубити деталі, мізкуючи в клятих баксах, -  
Все, що ти говорила тут, на проспекті Маркса,  
Чимчикуючи у підвороття, ніби на космодром.

*"Ох, забувай захоплення минулі"*  
Т. Котляревська

Мені забракло вихідного,  
дрібнички в ланцюжку тривоги, -  
твоїх усмішок дивна мова  
тепер повсюди, ніби бог.

Вже й дах підкорюється кожний,  
блищать мов мідяки, і чув -  
з труби лунали переможно  
оркестром "Пасадена Руф".\*

Загрався інтернетом Карлсон,  
голодний плаває планктон;  
за міф, поставлений на карту,  
банкує спірно син Антон...

Ніч, порно-радіоконцерти,\*\*  
вві сні сусідка долю мне;  
а я романсово-уперто  
тверджу: "Не забувай мене".

\*Англійський джаз-оркестр, який неодноразово гастролював у Німеччині. Велика фонотека з їхніми записами зберігалася на ризькому радіо.

\*\*Зазвичай тіла - в телевізорі. Однак і радіостанції трапляються різні. Втім, я не маю на увазі ризьке радіо.

## Intermezzo

"Коли веселий і кирпатий..."  
і стомлений та банькуватий  
коли дощу примхливі краплі  
із фюзеляжу в Ле Бурже  
якут що грає знов на таблі  
"Придбайте цигарки" - танго  
його... так схоже чимсь на чаплю  
вітраж не відобразить вже

танго на раз два три чотири  
та інші цифри наче гирі  
а хтось циновку знов потири  
і слід веде до ща мажор  
не посміхатись усміхнуться  
не цинік блешня і не нунцій  
в снастях рибалка от занудство  
чекає що настане жор

от пляшка в г'рунті чес клавірний  
на черв'яка клює сумирно  
чувак залишив благовірну  
щоб вкотре втрапить на гачок

забутий слід каністра гасу  
піжонство протиріччя часу  
фестони згубленої сукні  
думки лінівні наче трутні  
черв'як заморський тільки-но з крамнички  
в колоніальній вирощений річці  
рахунок про всяк випадок сплатив  
і спирт тече міцний як сто чортів

нічну вологість пий зі щедрих хмар  
яка враз буря в чашечці колінній!  
підборів безкінечний тарабар  
немов кошмар всесвітнього старіння

а якось пеліканів згря  
неначе квапилась до раю  
мов вищипані кури - в кріп  
хотілось впасти їм як сніп  
махали крилами звабливо  
і все очікували дива  
мов на гачечку карасі  
та я про це їх не просив

на пиках - погляд золотих Асканій  
се: casa blanca, loma, villa nova  
та будь мудріш - тістечка затаскали  
вони всю ніч шукали запасного

я засную на скані насип-шпали  
ліс по краях неначе гра підмайстра  
тут третій люд в тумані - Нельсон айстри  
і сні опівдні ватрою б злітали

подайте простір милу грішних снів  
залишмо залу коло бочок та вагантів  
і виявиться - почерк елегантний  
а отже й він згодиться поготів  
та діви бачать наче крізь завали  
сенс і борщів чи пряжок-брошок віршів  
(як відчуття це люди б не назвали)  
вони завжди себе кохають більше

на ті ж граблі звитяжно наступають  
нащадки Кия - гострі та щербаті  
яка земля в заплаві на Дунаї  
а прагнуть наживати звідти п'яти

доцент літа немов гусей тут пас  
бо твій камін не гріє душу суццю  
та є в кисеті свіжість про запас  
мов казка за лаштунками цілюща

**Dmitri Dragilew**, 1971, poet, translator, and fiction writer, was born in Riga. He graduated from the Latvian University, worked as a journalist and gave performances as a jazz pianist. He has been living in Germany since 1994, graduated from University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar and studied slavistics in the University of Jena. Author of several books of poetry and prose.

**Sergej Dzuba**, 1964, graduated from the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kiev where he had studied journalism. He has worked in a number of newspapers, journals and broadcast stations in Ukraine, and abroad as well. He is a prominent Ukrainian poet, prose writer, playwright and translator. He is President of the International Academy of Literature and Arts of Ukraine, member of National Writers' Union of Ukraine and some European academies. His poetry has been translated into 60 languages. As a translator of poetry and prose from different languages into Ukrainian he has won literary awards in the UK, Canada, Germany, Bulgaria, and other countries.



Dmitri Dragilew

Дмитрий Драгилёв

Z rušćiny Beno Budar\*

Translated into Sorbian by Beno Budar\*

### Peterisej Bjezaisej, kapitanej na wulkim morju

Móže być, zo je to dźiwne, tola njejsmy nikoho prosyli bajku bać  
do spanja

Přihotujće sej baldrijan, dopomny so na maličkosće, bjesadujmy wo  
Žiwjenju

Přeprěčena kónčina je jara wostudła,  
Je ćežko bjez digitalnych skakanskich pjerow wuńć

Ruski standard - je hólče šibałstwo, dołheho lulača  
Ředko zetkaš, za tango Strocka abo Piazzollasa "Verano porteno"  
Nalij něšto gramow, počejo wot sto  
Koleno je powabliwe, tola my diskutujemy wostudle wo lektorach  
a jich gramatiskich

Antenach

Někotři njejsu z kralownu w dešćowym płašću přezjedni,  
Přehnata manija čistoty abo brodač přez wšě scěny słyši.  
Štož wostanje je holcy za nós wodzić z něčim zapróšenym  
A štož je zhubiło kultowy status

(za to wozmu sej sobu Notebook):

Je tajka rasa Beagle - někotry jeho ani za psa nima...

Dwuposchodowy čolm z jednym šrubom ze srjedźnym natwarom

Předku z powyšenjom zady

Měješe dwaj sćežoraj a jedyn wuheń...

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\* © Beno Budar, 2016, translation

Něhdže tu probowaše Zfassmann a jeho sčerpliwi "Moscow Kids"  
Zaswěćichu wulkolampy Sowječikow, narěče kóždoho gerasimusa  
sy móhł na

Twerskej dróze słyšeć...

A hdyž prašeš so po zetkanju "kak je było?" njeznaju wotmołwy, ale  
Móžu sej

Předstajić

Zetkanje "Krassina" a "Čeljuskina" w zaliwje (B.A.) Wilkickeho

**Beno Budar** is a leading Upper Sorbian writer of both poetry and prose. He is very well known for his "bridge-building" in Slavic countries not only due to his popularity there as an author, but also as a translator.

## *Four Centuries Library*

Here are the books donated to the Library:

*In German*

102. Russische Lyrik ausgewählt und übersetzt von Ivan Senkiv.  
Dortmund: Wulff-Verlag, 1973

103. Gegen Grenzen. Gedichte von Jewtuschenko, Kirsanow,  
Wosnessenskij. Nachdichtungen von Anselm Hollo. Wiesbaden: Limes,  
1962

