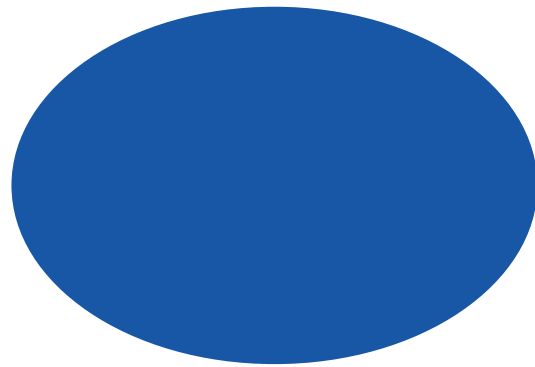


# FOUR CENTURIES

Russian Poetry in Translation



16

2017



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

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*Four Centuries Library* 41

The choice of colours for different languages is just random and has nothing to do either with national flags or national traditions.

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.

## XVIII

Grigory Skovoroda (1722 - 1794)

Григорий Сковорода (1722 - 1794)

Translated by Vadim Vozdvizhensky

### **De Libertate**

What is that freedom? What good is in it?  
Some claim it is gold. Isn't it?  
Ah, no gold, if gold is to be compared,  
Against freedom it is still mud uncared.  
Oh, if I had not been a fool to make,  
I would not have lost freedom by fake.  
Let Thee be glorified forever, oh favoured man,  
Father of freedom, hero Bogdan!

## Song the 11th

At the end of this grain: *The abyss summons the abyss, that is: In God's law is His will. Thou would give the living water, to the waters - the will and my abyss to Thy abyss.*

No abyss of the ocean covered with a fist of dust,  
No mill of flaming fire cooling down as water must.  
Could an eagle have his fight in a cavern with no light?  
Hence to heavens flying out he should get it no doubt,  
Thus your spirit feels unfull as no flesh can truly rule.

Abyss is the human spirit, as no waters, heaven wide.  
Feeling no full forever what your eyes are charmed by sight.  
Hence your anguish, boredom, grief are destroying your relief,  
Hence your hunger hot as heat, rising higher very steep.  
Know: your spirit feels unfull as no flesh can truly rule.

Oh, the race of flesh! Ignorami! Till when turning  
your blind eye?

Raise the eyes of heart! Look up at the heavens' hard.  
Why aren't you seeking what is called God?  
Why aren't you trying to see His plot?  
The abyss will suffice the abyss on the spot.

The end.

## Song the 13th

From this grain: *Come from their midst... Come, my brother, let us lodge in the village. There thy mother will give you birth* (The Song of Songs)

Oh, the fields, the fields so green,  
The fields of colours so keen!  
Oh, the valleys and ravines,  
Round tombs and hilly scenes!



Oh, you, streams of water clean!  
Oh, you, banks with grass not lean!  
Oh, you, curly-haired woods, leafy branches and deep roots!

The lark's fields are in between,  
The gale's gardens always green;  
That one's singing at great height, this one's whistling  
clear and light.

When the dawn is up again,  
Every bird's song has no end,  
All around the music sounds, fills the air and abounds.

As the sun is hardly out,  
Shepherd drives his sheep about.  
On the pipe he plays his trill soft and trembling at his will.

Go away, hard thoughts and dreams,  
Crowded towns, noisy scenes!  
As for me, I'm here to die, crumbs of bread to be my pie.

The end.

### **Song the 18th**

*God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

Oh, you bird in the yellow cloak,  
Put no nest in the tall oak!  
Put it in the green grass,  
In the shady, sweet, young mass.  
There's a hawk over your bed,  
Hov'ring, wanting your p'tite head,  
It feeds on your flesh and blood,  
Its sharp talons catch and cut!

A sycamore is up the hill,  
With its top to nod at will.  
Winds are blowing around,  
Breaking twigs above the ground.  
But willows are stirring low,  
Dragging me into a dream.  
There's pure water running;  
Its deep bottom down the stream.

Why should I think bad or bother,  
In the country born by mother?  
Let them tear their brains,  
Who drive fast and hold no reins,  
While I shall bide my time,  
Living quiet in my prime.  
Thus no trouble now and then,  
Being happy like all men.

The end.

Grihorij Szkovoroda (1722 - 1794)

Григорий Сковорода (1722 - 1794)

Magyarra fordította Vozdvizenszkij Vagyim

Translated into Hungarian by Vadim Vozdvizhensky

### **De Libertate**

Mi az, hogy szabadság? Mi haszon van benne?  
Sokan mondják, hogy aranyból lenne.  
Ah, nem aranyból, ha össze van hasonlítva.  
Szabadság mellett csak sárral borítva.  
Ó, ha butaságom meg sem történt volna,  
Saját szabadságom sem vesződött volna.  
Légy áldott örökké, ó nép választottja,  
Bogdán, a nagy hős és a szabadság atyja!

**Vadim Vozdvizhensky** has been studying and translating the poetry of Grigory S. Skovoroda for years. His dissertation on the Hungarian motives in the literary and philosophical works of Skovoroda is the first such study either in Hungary or the philosopher's homeland. Vadim Vozdvizhensky translates other Russian poets with devotion to Tokay or Hungary as for example Fyodor Tyutchev.

Alexander Sumarokov (1717 - 1777)  
Александр Сумароков (1717 - 1777)

Translated by Alex Cigale

**To the Great City of Moscow**  
(translation from Paul Fleming)

Oh you, our stolid ally of the Holstein nation.  
Among the Russian towns your name be Queen.  
You reveal to us the distant horizons seen  
On the path upon which we are now destined.

We, your river currents flowing to the source,  
Will joyfully proclaim your fraternity to the East;  
Your surpassing generosity toward your friends  
Exalt, our rivers having journeyed to the West.

May gracious heaven grant that thee long prosper,  
Irreproachable, inseparable from your quiet calm,  
That your blessed people live on in tranquility.

Accept these verses. Returning from my absense,  
I will endeavor illustriously to sing your fame,  
That the Volga race with praise to the Rhinean shores.

1755

## To Moscow

(translation from Paul Fleming)

Oh city, master of the Russian towns, superior  
In breadth and majesty, and store of riches!  
I see the gilded towers, but this gold before me  
Is cheaper, it seems, than my thoughts are forlorn.

You still appear before me in your marvelous color;  
In you, I left behind what is dearer to me than the rest,  
Someone who means more to me than my own heart;  
She lives in you who is most beautiful in all the realm.

The chosen places of Russia's principal attractions  
I praise with highest salutations, magnificent city;  
There is nothing comparable to you in all the land!

But there is yet another reason for my accolades:  
That you were my place of residence, by me beloved,  
Which does contain the best that nature has to offer.

1755

Alexander Sumarokov in *Four Centuries*:  
3, 2012, p. 7, translated into English by Alex Cigale

Ivan Dmitriev (1760 - 1837)

Иван Дмитриев (1760 - 1837)

Translated by Alex Cigale

### **Liberation of Moscow**

Accept, thou ancient, dreaming oak groves,  
Onto your shade this nurseling of the Muses!  
I wish to sing no merry choruses,  
Nor sweet songs of Cytherean fetters;  
But as I gaze out from the broad fields  
Upon that fair city, proud Moscow,  
Seated upon the summits of high hills,  
I will invoke the sleeping centuries!

Oh, in what splendor you now appear,  
Thou mother of renowned princes!  
Moscow, Russia's beloved daughter,  
None found anywhere to you compare.  
Your crown is decorated with pearls,  
A scepter of diamonds in your hands,  
The crest of your exalted towers  
Shimmering in gold as though with rays;  
From the North, the South, and the East --  
From all directions, with floodlike speed,  
Your treasured children flow onto you:  
Your strong sons, favorites of glory,  
Handsome, magnificent, and brave,  
And all your maidens, blooming as roses!

But once upon a time you too bewailed  
Under the burden of various scourges;  
You had just barely upheld the crown  
And your unsteadily tilting throne;  
Barely were you not concealed from our eyes,  
Vanishing from the face of this earth's sphere!  
The Pole had offered you his friendly hand  
And then raised the sharp point of a spear!  
And having raised it -- temples did flare up,  
And heavy chains clanked on your maidens,  
And their brothers' blood began being spilled!  
"I am dying, I am dying! You did utter,  
Rolling backwards your terrified eye.  
Oh, save me, the genius of our race!"  
Alas! A deep silence festered all around  
And the sword's edge, above your head!

Where art thou, the might of brave Slavs!  
Awake, rise up, oh Russian strength!  
Moscow is in chains, Moscow downcast,  
Like the dark and gloomy autumn night --  
She has risen! and everything did shudder!  
Both Prince and peasant, old and young,  
All rising up, clad themselves in armor!  
Your damask steel sword shone like a God!  
But of the thousands standing before my eyes,  
Who is this, graying, bold and esteemed?  
To all appearances, a chieftain, a leader:  
It is Pozharsky, Russia's mighty shield!  
My soul is enraptured and I feel thrilled!  
My spirit is inflamed and I take wing!  
Hand me my lyre! Emboldened, I begin!  
I wish to sing of our ancestor's brave feat!

The chainmail already rattles in the fields,  
In the distance, a column of dust rises,  
The faithful servants of Russia on the march;

Pozharsky, their chieftain, brings his thunder!  
The forest primeval that dreamt in dead silence  
Now wails with the cries of his army;  
The sunny orb of day and the night's stars  
Witness the hero, saddled on his horse;  
He flies -- and through our eyes he pours  
The light of joy into our creastfallen hearts;  
And like a whirlwind he flies, and moves  
Entire cities and villages to follow him!<sup>1</sup>

"What is that clamor?" pricking up his ears,  
The warrior said, sunk deep in thought.  
Looking up, paling, spirits dimmed, he throws  
Himself from Kremlin's walls into the fray.  
"Fly to your shields!" calls out the Pole, "Doom  
And destruction any minute loom: laid waste!  
I saw the adversary's force approaching:  
Like a serpent, it arcs and twists its spine,  
Its head already leaning upon the gates;  
Its monstrous tail covering the field entire".  
Suddenly, broad streets constrict with soldiers --  
They rush about, get in formation, divide up,  
By the gates, arrowslits, throng round the walls;  
Others, race out with the storm's fury  
To meet the enemy Slavs head on.  
Behold -- I see the flames all around,  
In smoke and in the fire of terrible battle!  
Shield upon shield clashing with a ring --  
And all at once, the strong is but no more!  
A cannonball whirred through the darkness,  
And an entire row of the fearless fell!  
There, a chief became pray to Hade's Erev;  
Here, spirited steed, spear in its entrails,  
Rears on its hind hoofs, and neighing

---

<sup>1</sup>The subject of this ode Dmitry Mikhaylovich Pozharsky (1577-1642) led the Russian forces against the Polish invaders in 1611-1612, towards the end of the Time of Troubles.



Crashes, collapsing prone to the ground,  
Covering the rider with its hefty bulk;  
Everywhere, I hear clatter and thunderclap,  
Deafening screeches, howls and moans.

Death feasts and horror has dominion  
Over city, valley, village and woods!  
There, a young maiden is trembling;  
There, and old man gazes up at the skies  
And bends his nape to his chilled heart;  
Wayfarer is chased by fear into thickets,  
And you, oh, saintly toiler who, while still  
Alive, warmed yourself inside the grave,  
Remembering yet this terrestrial sphere  
In the sun's pale light of your latter days;  
Recalled your bitter fate and with a tear  
Did irrigate your pale and sunken cheek,  
And held out your shaking hands toward  
Your God, His presence keenly felt!

Three times day broke and light dawned,  
And thrice did the dark night replace it;  
But the battle, uninterrupted, went on,  
And death was yet to rest his tireless hands;  
Pozharsky continues to lob his thunderbolts;  
Everywhere, he flies in the eagle's form --  
There he chases, here smites and punishes,  
Multiplying each mighty blow upon blow,  
Shaking the Lithuanian forces' strength.  
The one-hundred armed giant quakes,  
Falls to the ground, croaks! And a howl:  
"Hooray! Pozharsky is victorious!"  
And one hundred times the city echoes it:  
"Hooray! Pozharsky has saved Moscow."  
Oh, how joyous this memorious morning!  
Oh, forever will this eternal hour endure!

Who will hand me the portraying brush,  
That I may paint the joy divine that lights  
Up all the faces and burns in our hearts?  
With a bright and bold stroke I will depict  
The folk that resurrect upon the walls  
And roofs and scatter from the heights  
Laurels that drift down on our hero's head;  
And the choir that singeth victory's song,  
Going forth with banners to meet the Lord,  
And sacred Moscow radiant with palm fronds!

But where is our hero? Where has he hid?  
Where is the throng of Princes and boyars?  
Wherefrom is the resonant cry I hear?  
Heeding accolades, will he accede to the throne?  
Oh! What is this vision I see? The victor,  
The savior of Moscow and of our fatherland,  
Forgetting his old age, our day's supreme deed,  
And the glory resonating around his name,  
He hands the kingdom's reigns to the youth<sup>2</sup>,  
And bends down before him on one knee!  
"The blood of Tsars flows through your veins!  
Your sire in the hands of enemies, in chains,  
Accept thou the crown and Ceasar's scepter,  
And be the joy of Russians and their shield!"

And you, our champion, will live for the ages,  
As our honor, our glory, and a paragon to all!  
There, where the mountains prop up the clouds,  
A multitude of sonorous rivers will spring up,  
And from the millstone a mighty forest emerge;  
Verdant gardens will burgeon upon the plains  
And cities will arise and vanish, with time;

---

<sup>2</sup>After Moscow's liberation from the Polish-led intervention, Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov (1596-1645) became the first Tsar of the Romanov dynasty. Pozharsky had participated in his election by the Zemsky Sobor (Russia's first parliament, 1613).

An infinity of new marvels nature will create;  
Be they revealed to our astonished gaze;  
A new light will illuminate the cosmos,  
And the warrior, heartened by your blood,  
Remembering you, will become in his pride  
Greater ingrained, and further, further confirmed  
In his unshakable love for our fatherland!

*Summer 1795*

**Alex Cigale's** first full book, *Russian Absurd: Daniil Kharms, Selected Writings*, is just out in the Northwestern University Press's World Classics series. In 2015, he was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship for his work on the poet of the St. Petersburg philological school Mikhail Eremin. In 2016, he edited the contemporary Russian poetry issue of Atlanta Review (Georgia Tech), which contained the work of some 50 poets and 35 translators. His translations in this issue are forthcoming in a bilingual anthology of 400 Years of Poems About Moscow (OGI; Maxim Amelin, ed.)

Alex Cigale in *Four Centuries*:

- 2, 2012, p. 7 (Владислав Ходасевич), p. 8 (Георгий Адамович); p. 8 (Георгий Иванов)  
3, 2012, p.6 (Михаил Ломоносов), p.7 (Александр Сумароков),  
p.7-8 (Панкратий Сумароков), p.8 (Иван Барков)  
4, 2013, p.6-8 (Иван Тургенев), p.11-13 (Константин Бальмонт)  
6, 2013, p.5 (Николай Карамзин), p.6 (Василий Капнист),  
p.22-25 (Евгений Туренко)  
8, 2014, p.6-12 (Александр Шенин)  
15, 2016, p. 5-7 (Константин Батюшков), p. 8-9 (Константин Аксаков),  
p. 10 (Дмитрий Минаев)

## XIX

Michail Lermontov (1814 - 1841)

Михаил Лермонтов (1814 - 1841)

Vertaald door Paul Bezembinder

Translated into Dutch by Paul Bezembinder

### Mijn dolk

Ik sloot jou in mijn hart, mijn maat, mijn dolk,  
Sinds jaar en dag mijn onderkoelde kameraad,  
Gesmeed werd jij door vrijgevochten ruitervolk,  
Geslepen door een christenhart vervuld van haat.

Door lelieblanke hand wist jij jouw heft omvat,  
Als aandenken aan wat - aan wie - ik achterliet,  
In plaats van bloed vergleed er langs jouw blad  
Een opgewelde traan, een parel van verdriet.

Haar rokerige ogen vast op mijn persoon gericht,  
Vervuld van onbenoembaar, onuitspreekbaar leed,  
Verschoten, vlamden dan weer op in haar gezicht,  
Zoals jouw kling dat in het laaiend kampvuur deed.

Zij maakte jou mijn metgezel, haar liefdespand,  
De vagebond in mij volgt steeds jouw wijze raad,

Ja, trouw ben ik haar, ik doe mijn woord gestand,  
En jij, jij houdt mij bij de les, mijn kille kameraad!

1838

Michail Lermontov in *Four Centuries*:

9, 2014, p. 6-7, translated into English by Robert Chandler

9, 2014, p. 8, translated into German by Christoph Ferber

9, 2014, p. 9-10, translated into Romanian by Leo Butnaru

9, 2014, p. 11, translated into Hungarian by Maia Cezarskaja

9, 2014, p. 12, translated into Hungarian by Árpád Galgóczy

Paul Bezembinder in *Four Centuries*:

14, 2016, p. 59 (Иннокентий Анненский, Владимир Соловьёв, Фёдор Тютчев,  
Афанасий Фет)

15, 2016, p. 43 (Vera Polozkova)

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

## XX

Konstantin Balmont (1867 - 1942)

КОНСТАНТИН БАЛЬМОНТ (1867 - 1942)

### 150th Birthday Anniversary

Translated by Elena Dubrovina

#### God and Devil

I love you, Devil; I love You, God,  
To one I give my moan, to the other one - sigh.  
To one - my screams, to the other one - dreams,  
But you both are great, like the ecstasy of Beauty.

I wander like a cloud; there are many colors around,  
Whether I go to the North or I turn to the South,  
Or I swim far away from the East to the Sunset.  
The rubies will blaze and the agate turn black.

O, I am happy to live, and I cherish the grassland,  
And the Earth is green under my recent rain,  
And with the snaking lightening, and with the roar of thunder,  
I have ruined some dreams, many houses - burnt.

My house is hot and crowded, and my dreams are short-lived,  
The expanse of the height is airy and free, but  
After the long suffering I endured, the sigh is a gift,  
O, mysterious Devil; o, one and only God!

\* \* \*

One can live with eyes that are being shut,  
Not desire anything at all,  
Say goodbye forever to the sky,  
Understand that everything is fault.

One can live and silently grow old,  
Counting or not his fading time,  
And exist, like a slow-dying dream,  
Like a forest, thinning in the fall.

One can leave his precious life behind,  
And stop loving every idle whim,  
But he can't be cold to what has passed,  
And should not forget his distant past!

### **Until the Last Day**

Maybe, when you leave me  
You'll grow colder to me again.  
But for my whole life, until the last day,  
O, my friend, only mine you will remain.

I know that new passion will come;  
With the other you'll forget me once more.  
But in the memory the old images loom,  
And the old love smolders through.

And a painfully sweet moment will arrive,  
Flown away in the rays of the faded day,  
When with another man, looking into the immortal spring,  
You will wince - you will think of me even then.

## **At Night Near the Sea**

At night near the Sea, near the Sea at night  
Is scary and dark. The sand is crunching.  
O, I am in pain near the Sea at night.  
Somewhere there is happiness. But it's a long path.

I see the stars. One shines on us,  
It's brighter and more tender than the rest,  
But if only my heart will take it in, but  
It's still too far, and I can't be with her.

I die at night, near the Sea,  
The sand will swallow me, the wave will flood.  
Near the Sea at night, near the Sea at night,  
And only death will fall in love with me.

## **Farewell**

I have been met, I have been wed.  
The hearts were burning in the flower-bed.  
Why do I have so much of grief?  
I'll live with grief for years to come.

I used to tell I may become  
The graceful God, the brightest sun.  
I was in love. I sang a song. I walked through hell.  
And my heart was teaching me to love the love.

My light is shining through the mist of grief.  
My path will lead to the remote heaven.  
Forgive me... It ought to be. I do not know  
When we will meet. But now, I bid you - farewell.



## **Moonlight**

*Sonnet*

When the moon will flash in the dark of the night  
With its sickle, brilliant, tender,  
My soul will strive for another world,  
Still captivated by a distant and boundless land.

I'm racing in my dream, just like a spirit in pain,  
Towards the forests, mountains, white-snow tops.  
Above the peaceful world I am awake,  
I sweetly cry and I inhale - the moon.

I am inhaling its pale shine,  
Just like an elf, I sway in a web of beams.  
I listen to how silence speaks.

The suffering of those whom I love is myth,  
The whole earth is strange to me with such an eerie struggle,  
I am -- a cloud, I am -- a breath of breeze.

## **Only With Her**

I was in Russia. The rooks have cried.  
The wind of spring blew into my face.  
Why do you have so much of grief?  
We have been wed. You, save the ring.

And I was there and everywhere. For Russia, I cry.  
Again, I am so homesick. And I am mute.  
The fields are grey. The fields are crude.  
I have returned. But why? But why?

Who wants to be a victim? I am the one you miss.  
Who wants the blood? You take my life.  
But give me happiness, your only kiss.  
Just for a moment. And only with her I'm alive.

## A Swan

A creek is asleep. The mirrored water is mute.  
Only where the reeds doze  
Someone's sad song is heard,  
    As the last breath of a soul.

A dying swan cries,  
He talks with the past,  
And the fading night in the sky  
    Is on fire, but does not burn.

Why do these laments sound so sad?  
Why does his heart still beat so fast?  
At that moment, his soul would have asked  
    To bring the irrevocable back to him.

Everything he lived for, pain or bliss,  
Everything his love hoped for,  
Slipped away just like a passing dream,  
    It will never blaze again.

All of that which had a seal of time,  
A white swan combined in one song,  
As if he has begged the lake,  
    Dear to his heart, to forgive him.

When the distant stars twinkled then,  
When the fog has risen from the gloom,  
The swan's song became so quiet and sad,  
    And the reeds whispered at the end.

Lifeless, he sang that he was going to die,  
Therefore, he sang his final song  
That before his death, eternal, reconciling,  
    Had he seen the truth for the first time.

\* \* \*

Why am I so hot? Why am I so bored?  
I grow cold to my dreams.  
My days are the same. My life -- monotonous.  
I froze at the last lane.

Only one step left; only this swift-winged world,  
And from this pale people I'll walk away.  
In front of the open grave why do I delay?  
Don't I rush too fast into the mystery of my lot?

Full of joy, half-God, inspired, I am not the same,  
I am not a genius of a singing dream,  
I am a sad hostage; I am a grieving prisoner of my will.  
And I stand at my last lane.

Only one moment, swift-winged, and my soul as an albatross  
Will fly away into the unknown frost.  
I am too tired to move from one problem to another,  
I feel sorry I have ever lived on the Earth.

\* \* \*

I came into this world to see the Sun,  
The blue horizon.  
I came into this world to see the Sun  
The heights of hills.

I came into this world to see the sea,  
The splendid blossom of the dales.  
I locked this world into the only gaze.  
I am the lord.

I conquered the cold oblivion,  
Creating dream.  
I'm full of revelation at every whim,  
I always sing.

My dreams have come to life by suffering of mine,  
For that I have been loved.  
Who will be equal to me in my singing will?  
No one, no one.

I came into this world to see the Sun,  
But if the day has passed away,  
I'll sing... I'll sing about the Sun  
Before I die.

### **Percept of Being**

I asked the free wind,  
What shall I do to become young again?  
The playful wind replied to me:  
"Be airy like the wind and smoke!"

I asked the powerful sea,  
What is this great percept of being?  
The sounding sea replied to me:  
"Be always as sonorous as I am."

I asked the distant sun,  
How can I blaze up lighter than the sunrise?  
The sun said nothing.  
But my soul heard: "Just shine!"

\* \* \*

Throughout the world of chances to a living spring,  
I'm walking on the burning and smooth sand,  
I'm climbing secret steps to the blue height,  
Just like a winged kite I'm hanging in the void, --  
My fickle spirit strives so many times,  
It is still searching, praying: "O, where is my spring?  
I'll give for it the whole world of chance.  
I will give up it all for truthfulness of dreams,  
For joy to slowly absorb the fire of its rays,  
And for the cure of my aging days."

\* \* \*

I do not love her anymore,  
Without love my heart will die although.  
I do not love her anymore, --  
I call my life -- decoy.

I am -- a storm, I am -- abyss, I'm -- the night,  
Whoever I embrace -- I will destroy.  
O, happiness of being free! Just go away!  
And so, I do not love you anymore.

Konstantin Balmont in *Four Centuries*:  
4, 2013, p. 11-13, translated into English by Alex Cigale

**Elena Dubrovina** is the author of nine books of poetry, prose and literary essays (in both Russian and English), including a bilingual anthology "*Russian Poetry in Exile. 1917-1975*". She is the editor of two journals "*Russian Poetry Past and Present*" and "*Russia Abroad Past and Present*" (Charles Schlacks, Publisher). She is a bilingual writer; her short stories, poetry and literary essays have appeared in Russian and American periodicals. Elena Dubrovina is a recipient of the international Shakespeare's award by the Russian Writers' Union for the high quality of translations.

Leonid Martynov (1905 - 1980)  
Леонид Мартынов (1905 - 1980)

Translated into English by Maxim D. Shrayer  
and Tatiana Rebecca Shrayer

**First Snow**

He left in the early evening,  
"Gotta go..." he said.  
"Don't wait."

First snow was falling  
and the street  
was shrouded in white.

At the concession stand he asked  
the girl for a glass of wine,  
"Gotta go..." he muttered to himself.  
"And no fault of mine."

Later he telephoned from the square:  
"You're sleeping?"  
"No, I'm up."  
"What are you doing still awake?"  
She answered him:  
"I love."

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...He wasn't back till the next day  
past eleven o'clock.  
He groped his way across the room,  
like someone who's lost  
in the woods, where branches are all black  
and trunks are also black,  
and black are all the heavy drapes,  
and corners are pitch black,  
and silver-black armchairs  
crowd the room and speak no word...

She lowered her head,  
and, suddenly, he could see  
so clearly what she, perhaps,  
didn't want to recognize --  
there in the tumble of warming gold  
some other strand showed white.

He gently touched her loveliness --  
now forever his own,  
and then he knew  
whose gold he took  
to pay for his night out.

She turned to him and asked:

"What's that?"

He answered:

"It's first snow."

1946

Maxim D. Shrayner in *Four Centuries*:  
2, 2012, p. 15-25; 7, 2014, p. 54-59; 11, 2015, p. 18-22; 15, 2016, p.24-27  
(Давид Шраер-Петров)  
4, 2013, p. 29-37 (Илья Сельвинский)

**Maxim D. Shroyer** is a bilingual author and translator and a professor of Russian, English, and Jewish Studies at Boston College. Born in Moscow in 1967 to a writer's family, Shroyer emigrated to the United States in 1987. He has authored over ten books in English and Russian, among them the internationally acclaimed memoir "*Waiting for America: A Story of Emigration*," the story collection "*Yom Kippur in Amsterdam*," the double biography "*Bunin i Nabokov. Istoriia sopernichestva*," and the Holocaust study "*I SAW IT*." Shroyer's "*Anthology of Jewish-Russian Literature*" won a 2007 National Jewish Book Award, and in 2012 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship. Shroyer's *Leaving Russia: A Jewish Story* was recently released in paperback.

**Tatiana Rebecca Shroyer** was born in Boston in 2007. Granddaughter of David Shroyer-Petrov and daughter of Maxim D. Shroyer, Tatiana is an aspiring writer and violinist. A cycle of Tatiana's poems was recently published in *Creative Kids*. A 3-rd grader at the Driscoll School, Tatiana lives in Brookline, Massachusetts with her parents and older sister.



Anatoly Kudryavitsky  
Анатолий Кудрявицкий

## Four Prose Poems

Translated by Carol Rumens

### **In a Chink in the Void**

In a chink in the void, blows on the top of the head by a porcelain god were introduced as a means of persuasion. Persuaded people silently endured, and realised the depth of their delusions. God silently endured, thinking that when somebody needed to be punished, the one that got punished was always himself.

### **The Mind**

The mind inhabits a cell. The cell somehow senses the idleness of her grey hair lodger, and suggests that he should clean the floor or cook some soup, until at last she realises it's useless. At night, when the cell is asleep, the mind twists his way out through a little chink and, beating with his skinny, webbed wings, soar up into the valleys of the moon.

### **Earthquake**

It's easy to make an earthquake - for that you need to rock yourself properly on a chair. Perfect yourself - and ultimately the world will tremble with the first movement of your body. Perhaps the world will even rotate around your axis, provided you have one.

© Anatoly Kudryavitsky, 2001  
© Carol Rumens, 2017, translation

## Pigeons

If a bird flies in through the window, it's the dove of peace.  
A lot of them have consultations on the high-voltage towers  
here. In summer time, they don't pay much attention to people,  
but when the cold weather comes they wait for at least someone  
to open a small pane.

Anatoly Kudryavitsky in *Four Centuries*:  
8, 2014, p. 35-37, translated into English by Siobhán McNamara

**Anatoly Kudryavitsky** is a Russian-Irish poet and novelist. He has published three novels, seven collections of poems in Russian and four in English, the latest being *Horizon* (Red Moon Press, USA, 2016). A book of his selected novels in English translation titled *Disunity* has been published by Glagoslav Publications (UK/The Netherlands) in 2013. He also edited anthologies of contemporary Russian and German language poetry in English translation, *A Night in the Nabokov Hotel* and *Coloured Handprints* (Dedalus Press, 2006 and 2015) as well as two anthologies of Irish haiku, *Bamboo Dreams* (Doghaus Books, 2012) and *Between the Leaves* (Arlen House, 2016). He lives in Dublin, Ireland, and works as the editor of *Shamrock Haiku Journal*.

**Carol Rumens** is an English poet, essayist and translator, the author of 14 collections of poems, as well as occasional fiction and drama. She has received the Cholmondeley Award and the Prudence Farmer Prize. Her most recent publication is the prose book, *Self into Song*, based on three poetry lectures delivered in the Bloadaxe-Newcastle University Lecture Series. She is currently professor in creative writing at Bangor University, Wales, and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Her latest collection is *De Chirico's Threads*, was published by Seren Books in 2010.

Дмитро Кузьмін  
Дмитрий Кузьмин

Переклав українською Фрідріх Чернишов  
Translated into Ukrainian by Fridrich Tschernishow

### Пам'яті Андрія Сергєєва

Добре бути живим  
злитися на мента: спинив ні за що  
лізти за паспортом  
упустити проїзний і презерватив

Добре бути живим  
заскочити в Макдональдс  
взяти пиріжка зі смородиною  
якщо з вишнями треба чекати

Добре бути живим  
не сподобатись собі  
в синюватій вітрині

Господи, допоможи  
минути перехрестя на підході до метро  
зупини над горизонтом  
зле червоне сонце світлофора  
накажи розступитися  
потоку машин

© Дмитрий Кузьмин, 2017  
© Фрідріх Чернишов, 2017, translation

*Андрієві Сен-Сенькову*

вушна раковина  
серед усіх частин людського тіла  
найближча до мистецтва:  
форма її не функціональна  
краса - некорислива  
і ніби несправжня  
тендітно-рожевим в ній просвічує  
густа гаряча кров  
мистецтво полягає у тому  
щоби точним блискавичним рухом  
устроювати крихітну голку  
в те саме місце  
поступово  
укол за уколом  
біль відступає  
десь всередині

\* \* \*

Я навчив тебе, що не буває  
зради, людина широка,  
і в серці для двох чи трьох достатньо місця.  
Немає зради, та чи значить це,  
що й вірності нема?  
Він промовляв тобі, що ти -- його.  
Я не змогу промовити: ти мій,  
я дуже дорого ціную твою волю.  
Як бути своїм власним ти не вивчив.  
Трохи дрібних зірок  
на голих гілках, космос із дротів  
й недобудований квартал у нічний час доби  
не відрізнити від напівзруйнованого.

**К. К.**

Ми йдемо обійнявшись  
ти трохи вищий, тобі незручно  
але ти все рівно кладеш  
голову мені на плече  
зустрічна автівка  
ледве не в'їхала у світлофор  
так вивернув голову  
здивований водій  
ми сідаємо у тролейбус  
похилого віку кавказець  
від дверей переходить до вікна  
потім вперед по салону  
роздивитися з усіх сторін  
невже двоє хлопців  
сміливіше співгромадяни  
не ховайте очі  
вам доведеться  
до нас звикнути

\* \* \*

єврейський Новий рік  
припав на день народження  
хлопчика  
але єврейські гості  
не доїхали  
перепрошували втомилися  
а для себе  
було ліньки  
поратися  
з яблуками і медом  
ну куди тобі  
стільки свічок

хай там що  
в паспорті  
святкувати будемо  
повноліття  
у подарунок  
перша бритва  
скільки можна  
тягати мій станок  
ще по шматку пирога  
і спатки  
завтра важливе заняття  
з зубною щіткою в роті  
повторюєш складний крок  
в новому році  
все здійсниться  
красивий роман  
кебетна нова група  
майстер-клас у Дубліні  
вітчим не буде діставати  
п'яними дзвінками  
в новому році  
всі наші зустрінуться  
в Єршалаїмі  
в Амстердамі  
в Ксанадупурі  
пора спати, хлопчику  
годі ластитись  
дай-но зніму з тебе  
окуляри  
зарився носом  
мені в плече  
кудратий  
тиждень не голений  
з вітром в голові  
двадцятивосьмирічний  
вчитель ірландських танців  
мій син

## Сліди

Моя сперма, висохла, на вустах.  
Опік від погашеної сигарети на долоні.  
Напівстертий запис на пам'ять на зап'ястку:  
"Г'ібер Давенпорт Батай".  
Здається, я знаю, що у тебе на серці.

\* \* \*

Що сказати одне одному  
через вісімсот кілометрів

Головне -- багаторазово сказано  
Другорядне  
на відстані неактуальне

Вішати трубку  
не хочеться

У підвислій паузі  
все наполегливіше кличе тебе  
твій чайник зі свистком

\* \* \*

Вид з тринадцятого поверха:  
трава зелена,  
а гай такий яскравий,  
канарково-жовтий,  
як твоя куртка,  
і тільки самі вершечки  
ледь зашарілись.  
Чорний собака  
петляє між беріз.  
Будівництво навпроти  
закінчується.  
Щось металеве,  
що не пішло у діло,  
шпурнули в залізний контейнер.

Вантажівка гуднула  
сишим тенорком.  
Десь недалечко  
без упину дзвонить мобільник  
мелодією волинки.  
З жахом  
відступаю за двері балкону.  
Життя настільки прекрасне,  
що здається,  
умієш літати.

\* \* \*

Трохи фісташкового морозива  
тому, кого не можеш зберегти від війни.

Dmitry Kuzmin in *Four Centuries*:  
5, 2013, p. 35, translated into Gaelic by Christopher Whyte  
11, 2015, p.23-24, translated into French by Alexandr Petrossov

**Friedrich Chernyshov** is a Russian poet and translator from Ukraine. Born in Donetsk he studied at Donetsk National Medical University. He lives in Kiev and works as LGBT community activist and educator. Since 2013 his translations of German and Ukrainian poetry have been published in "Vozdukh" and "TextOnly" magazines. His original poems have been published in "Vozdukh" (Russia), "Yshsho Odnа" (Kazakhstan), and "Lystok" (Ukraine).



## XXI

Dmitri Dragilew  
Дмитрий Драгилёв

Translated by Maxim D. Shrayer

\* \* \*

And what if we try thirds  
fourths we have tried already  
it's in the very least  
a closer two-voice singing  
yet it maintains  
a minimum distance  
within the limits  
necessary for euphony  
and concord  
even if it's not much in vogue  
due to a new understanding of  
Harmony  
and what if scents in dreams  
prefer  
not thistles  
but sounds  
rolled into a thin tube  
there are many similar words  
Harmony and Germany  
Harpy and Hermione  
But this isn't about them  
And not at all about likeness

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English translation copyright © 2017 by Maxim D. Shrayer

\* \* \*

In the rustbelt of Brest's leaky boroughs  
blues philosophy going into labor  
I adore your perpetual languor  
and your boundless terrycloth shanghai  
semidarkness erupting with quagmires  
swollen glands of autumnal premiers  
the old freak show so dreadfully boring  
like a rustle of thirds in a fugue.

Here as always you fly like a shadow  
let's announce a ban on performance  
in these pampas the chicks don't amuse me  
same old curves, familiar goods  
the conductor is stealing from music  
sins of youth forgotten and shallow  
and the starlets don't even care  
as they smile at the local hoods

Not a dream but a stone weighin heavy  
on my heart melting thirds into seconds  
all the arguments for conservation  
have been roasted like chestnuts and sold  
chorus of naiads performs bloody murder  
springtime oars strumming banks of the river  
this is nothing ridiculous twitter  
a disorderly humming of psalms

Dmitri Dragilew in *Four Centuries*:

14, 2016, p. 32, translated into Ukranian by Sergei Dziuba

14, 2016, p. 39, translated into Sorbian by Beno Budar

**Dmitri Dragilew** was born in Riga in 1971 and immigrated to Germany in 1994. Poet, musician, journalist, translator and musicologist, he is the author of six collections of poetry and two books on music history. He co-founded music performance projects, several series of literary events and the Eddie Rosner jazz festival in Berlin. Since 2015 he has been serving as Chair of the Union of Russophone Writers in Germany. He received the 2006 prize of the Moscow literary magazine *Deti Ra* and was one of the winners of the 2006 Berlin Open Russian Slam. His books have been long-listed for the Moskovskii Schet Prize and the Novyi Zvuk Prize. He lives in Berlin.

## *Four Centuries Library*

Here are the books donated to the Library:

*In German*

111. Russische Gedichte. Eine Auswahl älterer Lyrik übertragen von Wanda Berg-Papendick. Weimar: Verlag Böhlau, 1946

112. Russische Lyrik. Volkslieder und Gedichte des klassische Zeitalters. Hrs. von Paul Friedrich. Berlin: A. Weichert Verlag, 1948

113. Die Kinder dieser Welt. Gedichte aus zwei Jahrhunderten. Fischer Verlag, 1993

(Achmatowa, Inber, Jewtuschenko, Mandelstam, Pasternak, Zwetajewa)