

A Collection of Poems by A.S. Pushkin



Winter Road

Across the wavering hazes
The moon is breaking through.
On the melancholy clearings
She dolorously pours her light.

Down the wintry, dismal highway
Runs the speedy troika,
The monotonous sleigh bell
Wearisomely tinkles.

A familiar note one hears
In the coachman's lengthy songs:
Now a spirited carousal,
Now a grieving of the heart . . .

Not a light, no dusky cabin,
Hush and snow . . . As I pass,
Only milestones with their stripes
Come my way alone . . .

Dismal, drear . . . Tomorrow, Nina,
Tomorrow, returning to my dear one,
I shall dream before the fire,
Gaze and never gaze my fill.

Tunefully the hand of the clock
Will complete its measured round,
And, removing the intruders,
Midnight will not sever us.

Dismal, Nina: drear my journey,
Drowsing, my coachman is silent now,
Monotonous is the sleigh bell,
Beclouded the face of the moon.

Winter Evening

Storm with mist the heavens covers,
Snowy whirlwinds twisting;
Now like a wild beast falls roaring,
Now falls crying like a child,
Now along the wizened roof
Abruptly with the straw it rustles,
Now like a belated wanderer
At our window it will rap.

Our decrepit little cabin
Is both dismal and dark.
How comes it, dear old granny,
You fell silent a little at the window?
By the storm's roar, off and on,
Are you numbed, my dear,
Or dozing to the buzz
Of your spindle?

Let us drink, kind little friend
Or my wretched youth,
Let us drink from grief; where is the jug?
The heart will be gayer.
Sing me the song of how the blue tit
Quietly lived beyond the sea;
Sing me the song of how the maiden
Went for water at the morn.

Storm with mist the heavens covers,
Snowy whirlwinds twisting;
Now like a wild beast falls roaring,
Now falls crying like a child,
Let us drink, kind little friend
Or my wretched youth,
Let us drink from grief; where is the jug?
The heart will be gayer.

Whether I Wander Along Noisy Streets

Whether I wander along noisy streets
Or step into a temple dense with people,
Or sit among fervescent youth,
I give myself over to my fancies.

I say: the years will flash by,
And, as many of us as are to be seen here,
We will descend beneath the eternal vaults -
And someone's hour is already near.

As I gaze upon a solitary oak,
I muse: the patriarch of the woods
Will outlive my forgotten age,
As it outlived my fathers' age.

When I caress a dear young child,
I am already thinking: farewell!
I yield my place to you:
It is time for me to wither, for you to flower.

Each day, each year
I have come to usher out in fancy,
Of my approaching death the anniversary
Intent to guess among them.

And where will fate send me death
In battle, while roving, in the waves?
Or will the neighbouring vale
Receive my dust frown-cold?

And though to the unfeeling body
It is all one where it decays,
Yet near as may be to the dear environs
I would still like to lie at rest.

And at the entrance to the grave
May young life play,
And indifferent nature
Shine with everlasting beauty.

To the Slanderers of Russia

What do you raise an outcry over, national bards?
Why do you threaten Russia with Anathema?
What stirred you up? The throes of Lithuania?
Desist: this is a strife of Slavs among themselves,
An old domestic strife, already weighed by fate,
An issue not to be resolved by you.

Long since among themselves
These tribes have been at war;
More than once has bent beneath the storm
Now their, now our side.

Who will prevail in the unequal strife:
The boastful Lekh, or the faithful Ross?
Will the Slavonic streams converge in the Russian sea?
Will it dry up? Here is the question.

Leave us alone: you have not read
Those bloody tablets;
To you is unintelligible, you is alien
This family feud;
Mute to you are the Kremlin and Praga;
Unthinkingly you are beguiled
By the valor of a desperate struggle -
And you hate us . . .

And for what? Reply: is it because
On the ruins of blazing Moscow
We did not acknowledge the insolent will
Of him under whom you quaked?
Because we hurled into the abyss
The idol heavy-looming over kingdoms,
And with our blood redeemed
Europe's freedom, honour, and peace?

You are menacing in words - just try to be in action!
Is then the old thane, resting on his bed,
Unfit to mount his bayonet is Ismail?
Or is the Russian Tsar's word powerless by now?
Or is it new to us to be at odds with Europe?
Or has the Russian grown unused to victories?
Are there too few of us? Or will, from Perm to Tauris,
From frigid crags of Finland to the flaming Colchis,
From the shaken Kremlin
To stagnant China's walls,
Flashing with steely bristle,

Not rise the Russian land?
Send them to us, oh, bards,
Your sons enraged:
There's room for them in Russia's fields,
'Mid graves that are not strange to them.

To the Sea

Farewell, free element!
For the last time before me
You roll your blue waves
And gleam in your proud beauty.

Like a friend's sorrowful mutter,
Like his call at the hour of leaving-taking,
Your doleful sound, your sound of summons
I have heard for the last time.

My soul's longed-for realm!
How often along your shores
Have I roved, silent and bedazed,
Troubled by a cherished design!

How I loved your call-notes,
Your muffled sounds, the chasm's voice,
And your silence at the evening hour,
And your wilful surges!

The humble sail of fisherman,
By your caprice preserved,
Glides bravely amid the breakers:
But let a playful mood seize you, indomitable one,
And flock of ships founders.

I did not contrive to leave forever
The dull, immobile shore,
To greet you with surges of rapture
And by your crests to guide
My poet's flight!

You waited, you called . . . I was in fetters;
Vainly struggled my soul:
By a mighty passion spellbound,
At the shores I remained . . .

What is there to regret? Whither now
Would I direct my carefree way?
A single object in your wilderness
Might have struck my soul fancy.

One cliff, the gravestone of glory . . .
There were steeped in chill sleep

Memories majestic:
There Napoleon's flame died.

There he found rest amid agonies.
And in his wake like noise of tempest
Another genius sped from us,
Another potentate of our thoughts.

He vanished, bemoaned by Freedom,
Leaving his wreath to the world:
Roar out, well up with stormy weather:
He was, oh Sea, your singer.

Your image had left its mark on him
He was created of your spirit:
Like you, mighty, deep, and darkling,
Like you, undaunted by anything.

The world has emptied . . . whither now
Would you bear me off, Ocean?
Earth's lot is everywhere the same:
Where there is a drop of bliss, there stands on guard
Already Enlightenment or a tyrant.

Farewell then, Sea! I shall not forget
Your festive beauty,
And long, long shall I hear
Your deep roar in the evening hours.

To forests, wilderness silent
Shall I transport, full of you,
Your cliffs, your bays,
And the glitter and shade and murmur of your waves.

To...

I recollect a wondrous moment:
Before me *you* appeared,
Like a fleeting apparition,
Like the genius of pure beauty.

In the oppression of hopeless grief
In the concerns of noisy bustling,
Long I could hear your tender voice,
And dreamed of your dear features.

Years passed. The turbulent gusts of storms
Dispelled former dreams,
And I forgot your tender voice,
Your heavenly features.

In the numbness, the gloom of confinement.
Quietly my days dragged on,
Without godhead, without inspiration,
Without tears, without life, without love.

Awakening set in for my soul:
And here again you appeared,
Like a fleeting vision,
Like the genius of pure beauty.

And my heart beats in rapture,
And there are reborn for it afresh
Godhead, and inspiration,
And life, and tears, and love.

The Upas Tree

In sere and grudging wilderness,
On soil aglow with summer blazes
The Upas Tree, like a dead sentinel,
Stands-lone in all creation.

The nature of the thirsting steppes
Has born it on a day of wrath
And steeped the dead green of its branches
And its roots in venom.

The venom seeps across its bark,
Toward noon dissolving from the blaze,
And in the evening stiffens up
Into a thick transparent resin.

To it no bird will fly
Or tiger come: alone the swarthy whirlwind
Runs up upon the tree of death -
And rushes forth, by now death-dealing.

And if an errant cloud bedews
Its somnolent leaf,
Then from its branches, venomous now,
The rain runs down into the blazing sand.

But man by man
Was sent to the Upas with imperious glance,
And he obediently sped on his way
And came back with the venom by the morning.

He brought the deadly pitch
And a branch with withered leaves,
And sweat upon his pallid brow
Coursed down in chilly streams;

Brought it - and faltered and lay down
Beneath the valued tent upon the rushes,
And died, poor minion, at the feet
Of the unconquerable potentate.

As for the Tsar, he battened with this venom
His servile arrows,
And with them sent calamity abroad

On neighbours into alien parts.

The Monastery on Mount Kazbek

High above thy clan of mountains,
Kazbek, thy royal tent
Shines with eternal rays.
The monastery beyond the clouds,
Like in the skies a hovering ark,
Steams, barely visible above the peaks.

Far-off, longed-for bank!
Thither, saying farewell to the gorge,
To rise up to the free height;
Thither I would, into a cell beyond the clouds,
Disappear to the neighbourhood of God! . . . "

The Gypsies

The Gypsies in a noisy throng
Roam about Bessarabia.
Today on a river bank they
Spend the night in their tattered tents.
Like freedom, gay is their night's camp
And peaceful their sleep beneath the heavens;
Between the wheels of the wagons,
Half-hug-over with rugs,
Burns the fire; the family around it
Cooks suppers; in the bare field
Graze the horses; behind the tent
A tame bear lies at liberty.
All is lively amid the steppes:
The peaceful cares of the families,
Ready to be off by morning on the short day's trek,
And women's songs, and children's shouting
And the ring of the travelling anvil.
But presently upon the nomad train
Descends sleepy silence,
And one can hear in the steppe quiet
But the barking of dogs and the neighing of horses.
The lights everywhere are extinguished,
Quiet is all, the moon gleams
Alone from the heavenly height
And sheds her twilight over the quiet encampment.
In one tent an old man is awake;
He is sitting in front of the embers,
Warmed by their last glow;
And gazes at the distant fields,
Which are covered by the mist of night.
His young daughter
Has gone to ramble in the deserted fields
She is inured to frisky freedom,
She will come back; but here is night already,
And soon the moon will have left
The distant heaven's clouds -
Zemfira is missing as before; and
The old man's poor supper is growing cold.
But here she is. Following behind her
Over the steppe a young man hurries;
To the gypsy he is quite unknown.
"My father," says the maiden,
"I am bringing a guest, behind the mound

In the wasteland I found him
And called him to the camp for the night.
He wants to be a gypsy like us;
He is pursued by the law,
But I will be his love.
His name is Aleko - he
Is ready to follow me everywhere."

The Bronze Horseman

Upon a shore of desolate waves
Stood *he*, of lofty musings full,
And gazed afar. Before him broadly
The river rolled; a wretched skiff
Held course on it in solitude.
About the mossy, marshy banks
Showed blackly cabins here and there,
The shelters of the lowly Finn;
And forest, alien to the rays
Of the fog-enshrouded sun
Murmured all about.

And he thought:
From here we shall threaten the Swede,
Here shall a city be founded
To spite the puffed-up neighbour.
By nature we are destined here
To hack a window through Europe,
To plant a firm foot by the sea.
Here upon billows new to them
All flags will come to visit us,
And we shall revel in open space.

A hundred years have passed, and the young city,
Glory and marvel of the midnight lands,
From forest gloom, out of the bog of marshlands,
Has risen splendidly, pridefully;
Where formerly the Finnish fisherman,
Sad step-son of Nature,
Alone by the low banks
Used to cast into the unknown waters
Of the playgrounds of Mars,
Of troops and infantry and horse
The uniform beauty,
In their in-unison-swaying array
The tatters of those victorious standards,
The gleam of those bronze helmets,
Shot right through in battle.
I love, martial capital,
Your citadel's smoke and thunder,
When the Empress of the North
Presents a son to the imperial house,
Or Russia once again celebrates

A victory over the foe.
Or, having broken her blue ice,
Neva bears it to the seas,
And scenting vernal days, exults.

Flaunt your beauty, Peter's city, and stand
Unshakeable, like Russia,
And may even the conquered element
Make its peace with you;
Would that Finnish seas forget
Their enmity and ancient bondage
And trouble not with empty spite
Peter's eternal slumber.

There was a dreadful time,
Fresh is the memory of it . . .
Of it, my friends, for you
I will begin my narrative.
Sorrowful will be my tale.

PART ONE

Over darkened Petrograd
November breathed autumnal chill.
Splashing with noisy wave
Against the edges of her neat embankment,
Neva was tossing like a sick man
In his unrestful bed.
It was already late and dark;
Angrily the rain beat on the window,
And the wind blew, dismally howling.
At that time homeward from a visit
Came young Eugene . . .
We will call our hero
By this name. It has
A pleasant sound; long with it
My pen has been on friendly terms, what's more;
His other name we have no need for,
Although in bygone times
It may perhaps have shone
And by the pen of Karamzin
Have rung out in our native legends;
But nowadays by society and fame
It is forgotten. Our hero
Lives in Kolomna ; he works in some office,
Shies away from the eminent and worries his head

Neither about buried kin
Nor about forgotten times of yore.

And so, having come home, Eugene
Flung off his cloak, undressed, lay down.
But for a long time he could not go to sleep
In the excitement of diverse trains of thought.
What did he think about, then? About the fact
That he was poor, that by hard work
He had to secure for himself
Independence as well as honour;
That God might have granted him
More brains and money; that there were, after all,
Such lucky idlers,
Of limited wits, lazy fellows,
Who had such an easy life of it!
That he had been in the service but two years;
He also reflected that the weather
Was not clearing; that the river
Kept rising; that they would hardly
Have failed to take down the Neva bridges by now,
And that Parasha and he would be
Parted for two or three days.

At this point Eugene gave a feeling sigh
And gave way to his thoughts like a poet.

"Get married? I? Well, why not?
It would be hard going, certainly;
But what of it, I am young and healthy,
Ready to labor day and night;
Somehow I'll surely manage for myself
A humble and simple refuge,
And in it I'll settle Parasha to a peaceful life.
A year or two perhaps will pass,
And I'll receive a modest position; to Parasha
I'll entrust our family
And the upbringing of the children . . .
And we shall begin our life, and so to the grave
The two of us will go hand in hand,
And out grandchildren will bury us . . ."

Thus he mused. And sad felt
He that night, and he wished
The wind would not howl so dismally
Or the rain beat on the window

So angrily -
His sleepy eyes
He closed at last. And here is
The foul night's fog thinning,
And pale day already drawing up . . .
That day of horror!
Neva all night
Thrust toward the sea against the gales,
Unable to master their boisterous wildness . . .
And could not contend no longer . . .
In the morning on her banks
People crowded in swarms,
Relishing the spray, the mountains
And foam of the maddened waters.
But by the force of the winds from the gulf
Dammed up, Nev
Turned back, wrathful, tempestuous,
And swamped the islands;
The weather rages more wildly,
Nev swelled and roared,
Gurgling and welling up like a cauldron,
And of a sudden, bristling like a beast,
Rushed on the city. Before her
All fled, all about
Was suddenly deserted - the waters suddenly
Flowed into cellars underground,
Up to the grillwork gushed up the canals,
And afloat was Petropolis, like Triton
Steeped to the waist in water.

Beleaguerment! Assault! The angry waves,
Like thieves, climb through the windows. Boats
Swooping, smash panes with their sterns.
Pedlar's trays under sodden cover,
Fragments of huts, beams, roofs,
The merchandise of thrifty trading,
The chattels of pale beggary,
Bridges carried away by the storm,
Coffins from the flooded cemetery
Float down the streets!
The people
Gaze on the wrath of God and bide their doom.
Woe! All is perishing: shelter and food!
Where turn for them?
That dreadful year
The late Tsar still rules over Russia

With renown. Onto the balcony,
Sorrowful, troubled, he came out
And spoke: "Against God's element
There is no prevailing for tsars." He sat down
And thoughtfully, with stricken eyes
Gazed at the grim calamity.
The squares stood lay like lakes,
And into them like broad rivers
Debouched the streets. The palace
Seemed a desolate island.
The Tsar spoke - and from end to end,
Down the streets nearby and far-off
Upon their hazardous path amid the stormy waters
Set off his generals
To save the people who where both terror-struck
And drowning at home in their homes.

It was then that on Peter's square,
Where in a corner a new house had risen tall,
Where over its lofty porch,
Paws unpraised, like live creatures,
Stand two guardian lions,
Astride on the beast of marble,
Hatless, arms crossed
Sat motionless, terribly pale,
Eugene. He was in terror, poor soul,
Not for himself. He did not sense
The greedy flood mount up,
Lapping at his soles from below,
Or the rain lash at his face,
Or the wind, wildly howling,
Suddenly tear off his hat.
His despairing gaze
Upon one distant range
Was fixed unmovingly. Like mountains,
From the stirred-up deeps
Rose up the billows there and raged,
There howled the storm, there drifted
Wreckage . . . God, God! there -
Alas, close, very close to the waves,
Almost right on the gulf -
Is an unpainted fence, and a willow,
And a frail old house: there are they,
The widow and her daughter, his Parasha,
His daydream . . . or is it in a dream
He sees this? Or is all our

Very life nothing but an idle dream,
A mockery of heaven at earth?

And he, as though bewitched,
As though onto the marble riveted,
Cannot get down! About him
Is water and nothing more!
And, with his back turned to him,
In unshakeable eminence,
Over the tumultuous Neva
Stands with outstretched hand
The idol on his bronze steed.

PART TWO

But now, sated with destruction
And wearied by her insolent rampage,
Neva drew back,
Reveling in the turmoil she had made,
And abandoning with heedlessness
Her booty. Thus an outlaw
With ruthless gang
Having burst into a village, will shatter, slash,
Smash and loot; shrieks, gnashing,
Rape, cursing, panic, howls!
And then, with plunder weighed down,
Fearing pursuit, exhausted,
The robbers hurry homeward,
Dropping their plunder as they go.

The water had subsided, and the pavement
Was uncovered, and my Eugene
Is hastening, his heart wrenched
In hope, terror, and anguish,
Toward the barely calmed-down river.
But full of the triumph of victory,
The waves still seethes angrily,
As if beneath them fire were glowing,
Still foam covered them,
And heavily Neva was breathing,
Like a charger that has galloped up from battle.
Eugene looks: sees a boat;
He runs to it as to a god-send,
And calls the ferryman -
And the ferryman, unconcerned,

For a ten-kopeck piece willingly
Takes him through the fearsome waves.

And long with the stormy waves
Struggled the experienced oarsman,
And the skiff was about to sink into the deep
Between their ranks at any time
With its bold sailors - and at last
It reached the bank.

The luckless man
Runs down the well-known street
To well-known places. He gazes,
Cannot make anything out. Terrible sight!
All before him is piled up,
One thing flung down, another swept away;
Some little houses are askew, other
Are utterly in ruins, others still
Moved from their places by the waves; all around,
As if upon a battlefield,
Bodies lie scattered. Eugene
Headlong, not remembering anything,
Breaking down under his torments,
Runs where there awaits him
Fate with unknown tidings,
As with a sealed letter.

And here he is already running through the suburb,
And here is the Gulf, and nearby the house . . .
But what is this . . . ?
He stopped.
He went back and turned around.
He gazes . . . walks on . . . gazes again.
Here is the place where their house stands;
Here is the willow. There was a gate here -
It must have been swept away. But where is the house?
And full of dark alarm,
He keeps walking, walking round about,
Argues aloud with himself -
And suddenly, striking his forehead with his hand,
He burst out laughing.
The mist of night
But long the townsmen did not sleep
And talked among themselves
About the day just passed.

The ray of morning
From behind tired, pale clouds

Glinted over the silent capital
And found no more traces
Of yesterday's calamity; with purple cape
Already covered was the mischief.
Everything settled back into the former order.
Already along the clear streets
With their cool indifference
People were walking. Officialdom,
Having left the night's shelter,
Was off to work. The plucky tradesman,
Undaunted, was opening up
The cellar looted by Neva,
Preparing to recoup his grave loss
At his neighbour's cost. Out of the courtyards
Boats were being carted off.
Count Khvostov,
Poet beloved of the heavens,
Already sang in deathless verses
Of the misfortune of the Neva banks.

But my poor, poor Eugene . . .
Alas! his turbid mind
Against those dreadful shocks
Did not stand up. The noisy tumult
Of the Neva and of the winds resounded
In his ears, of horrid thoughts
Speechlessly full, he roved about.
He was tormented by a kind of dream.
There passed a week, a month - he
Did not return to his own place.
His forsaken nook
Was let upon expiry of his term
By the landlord to a poor poet.
Eugene never came
To fetch his goods. Soon to the world he
Became a stranger. All day he wandered on foot,
And slept on the embankment; he fed
On morsel [s] handed him through windows.
The threadbare clothing he wore
Tore and mildewed. Wicked children
Threw stones at his back.
More than once coachmen's whips
Lashed him, because
He could make out this way
No longer, ever; but it seemed he
Did not notice. He has deafened

By the rushing noise of anxious inner turmoil.
And so his miserable span of life
He dragged on, neither beast nor man,
Neither this nor that, neither dweller of the earth
Nor specter of the dead . . .
Once he slept
By the Neva embankment. The days of summer
An untoward wind. A sullen tide
Splashed the embankment, muttering complaints
And beating against the smooth steps
Like a petitioner at the door
Of magistrates who do not hearken him.
The poor wretch awakened. It was murky:
Rain dripped, the wind was howling mournfully,
And with it in the distance, in the gloom of night,
A watchman traded hails . . .
Eugene jumped up; he vividly recalled
The former horror; hastily
He rose, went off to roam, and of a sudden
Came to a halt - and round about
He gingerly allowed his eyes to wander,
Wild apprehension on this face.
He found himself beneath the pillars
Of a great house. Upon the portico
With unpraised paw, as thought alive,
Stood lions sentinel,
And straight, in his dark eminence,
Above the railed-in crag
The idol with his arm stretched forth
Was seated on his steed of bronze.

Eugene shuddered. Fearfully clear
Became his thoughts. He recognised
The place where the flood had sported
Where the preying waves had crowded,
Rioting viciously about him,
And the lions, and the square, and him,
Who motionlessly loomed,
His brazen head in the dusk,
Him by whose fateful will
The city by the sea was founded . . .
Awesome is he in the surrounding gloom!
What thought upon his brow!
What power within him hidden!
And in that steed, what fire!
Whither do you gallop, haughty steed,

And where will you plant your hooves?
Oh, mighty potentate of fate!
Was it not thus, aloft hard by the abyss,
What with curb of iron
You reared up Russia?

Round about the Idol's pedestal
The poor deranged man walked
And cast fierce glances
Upon the countenance of the ruler of half the world.
His chest tightened. His brow
Was pressed against the chilly railing,
His eyes filmed over with dimness,
Flame ran over his heart,
His blood seethed. Scowling he stood
Before the prideful statue
And, teeth clenched, fingers tightened into fists,
As though possessed by some black power,
"All right then, wonder-working builder!"
He whispered with a shudder of spite,
"I'll show you . . . !" And suddenly full tilt
He set off running. It seemed
To him that the dread Tsar's face,
Instantly aflame with wrath,
Was slowly turning . . .
And he runs down the empty square
And hears behind him,
As if it were the rumbling of thunder,
A heavily-ringing gallop
Over the quaking pavement.
And twilit by the pallid moon,
Arm reaching forth on high,
There speeds after him the Bronze Horseman
Upon the clangorously galloping steed;
And all night, wherever the wretched madman
Might turn his steps,
Behind him everywhere the Bronze Horseman
Was galloping with heavy clatter.

And since that time, whenever he happened
To walk by that square,
His face would express
Confusion. To his heart
He would hastily press his hand,
As if soothing its agony,
His worn cap he would doff,

Would not life up his abashed eyes
And go some other way.

A small island
Can be seen offshore. Sometimes
There will make fast there with his net
A fisherman belated on his haul
And cook his frugal supper there,
Or a government clerk will visit,
Out boating on a Sunday,
The desolate island. There has grown
No green blade there. The inundation
Thither in its play had swept
A frail little house. At the waterline
It had been left like a black bush;
The foregoing spring
They hauled it off on a barge. It was empty
And all in ruin. At the threshold
They came upon my madman,
And on that spot his chill corpse
They buried for the love of God.

Tempest

Saw you a maid upon a cliff
In raiment white above the breakers,
When blustering in tempestuous spray
The sea was sporting with the beaches,
When lightning's streak illumined her
Time and again with scarlet fulgence
And the wind struggled and flew
With her flighty covering?
Grand is the sea in the tempest spray,
And the sky aflash without its azure;
Believe me, though: the maid upon the cliff
Is grander than the breakers, skies, and tempest.

Raven to Raven Flies

Raven to raven flies,
Raven to raven cries:
Raven! Where's to dine for us?
How shall we forage for it?

Raven to raven in reply:
I know there will be dinner for us;
In the open field beneath a willow
A thane lies slain.

Killed by whom and for what cause,
That alone his falcon knows,
And his mare of raven hue
And his mistress young.

Falcon flew into the wold,
Mare was mounted by the foe,
And the mistress bides her loved one,
Not the slain one, but a live one.

I Used To Love You: Love Has Still, It May Be

I used to love you: love has still, it may be,
Not lied down altogether in my soul;
But may it not alarm you any longer;
I do not want to sadden you with aught.
I used to love you wordless, without hope,
With shyless now, with jealousy now racked;
I loved you so ingenuously, so dearly,
As God may grant you to be loved by another.

In The Country

I greet the, isolated nook,
Refuge of quietude, of toils and inspiration,
Where flows the invincible current of my days
In the lap of happiness and oblivion.
I am thine - I have exchanged the sinful court of Circes,
Luxurious feasts, amusements, dissipations,
For the peaceful rustle of oak groves, for the quiet of fields,
For free idleness, the friend of reflection.
I am thine - I love this dark garden
With its cool and flowers,
This meadow, studded with fragrant hay-ricks,
Where bright streams murmur in the bushes.
Everywhere before me are animated pictures:
Here I see two lakes' azure expanses,
Where the sail of a fisherman whitely shines at times,
Behind them a row of hills and striped cornfields
In the distance scattered huts,
Wandering cattle on the humid banks,
Smoky drying-sheds and winged windmills;
Everywhere traces of contentment and toil . . .
Here I freed from the bonds of daily vanities,
Am learning to find bliss indeed,
With free soul and worship law,
Not hearken to the unenlightened crowd's mutter,
With sympathy to answer shy entreaty
And not to envy the lot
Of malefactor or of fool - in their unlawful grandeur.
Oracle of the ages, here I question thee!
In this majestic isolation
More audible is thy consoling voice.
It chases of the sullen sheep of indolence,
To labors stirs hot zeal in me,
And thy creative thoughts
Ripen in the soul's depth.
But a terrifying thought here darkens the soul:
Amid blossoming crops and mountains
The friend of humanity sadly observes
Everywhere the murderous shame of ignorance.
Not seeing tears, not hearing groans,
By destiny selected for men's undoing,
Here a savage class of squires, without feeling, without law,
Has arrogated to itself with the rod of violence
The labor, property, and time of the tiller of the soil.

Bent over alien plough, humbled to whips,
Here an exhausted slavedom plods along the furrows
Of the implacable proprietor.
Here all drag on the ponderous yoke to the grave,
Not daring to nurse in their souls hopes or inclinations,
Here youthful maidens blossom
For the caprice of an unfeeling evildoer.
The dear support of aging fathers,
Young sons, companions of their toils,
From the native cabin go to swell the numbers
Of the throng of worn-out manor serfs.
Oh, if my voice knew how to trouble hearts!
Wherefore burns in my breast a fruitless glow,
And heroism's formidable gift was not vouchsafed to me my fate?
Shall I see, oh friends, a nation unoppressed
And serfdom fallen by the emperor's sign of hand,
And on a fatherland of enlightened liberty
Will there arise at last a lovely dawn?

From Pindemonte

I do not greatly value those loud rights
From which more than one head is spinning.
I do not mutter at the gods' having denied me
The sweet participation in disputing taxes
Or interfering with the kings at was with one another;
And it's small grief to me whether the Press is free
To mystify the numskulls, or a sensitive censorship
Does cramp some wag in journalistic schemes;
All this, you see, is "words, words, words."
Other and better rights are dear to me;
Another, better freedom do I need:
Be subject to a king, be subject to a nation -
Is it not all the same to us? Let them be. To nobody
To be accountable, oneself alone
To serve and please; to power, to a livery
Not have to bend nor conscience, nor ideas, not neck;
By one's own whim to wander here and there,
Marvelling at Nature's godlike beauties,
And before works or art and inspiration
Joyfully tremulous in transports of emotion:
There is happiness! There are rights . . .

Bacchic Song

Why has the voice of gaiety fallen silent?
Resound, bacchanalian refrains!
A toast to the tender maidens
And youthful women who loved us!
Pour fuller the glass!
Against the clinking bottom
Into the thick wine
Cast the ritual rings!
Let us raise our glasses, let's move them together!
A toast to the Muses, a toast to reason!
Glow thou, oh, sacred sun!
As this candelabrum pales
Before the bright rise of the dawn,
Thus false cleverness flickers and fades
Before the deathless sun of the mind.
Long live the sun, let darkness vanish!

A Beauty

All in her is harmony, all marvel,
All higher than the earth and passions;
She bashfully remains sequestered
In her triumphant beauty;
She gazes about her:
She has no rivals, has no friends;
The pallid circle of our beauties
In her radiance vanishes.

Wherever you might have been hastening,
And if it were a lover's tryst,
Whatever in your heart be nursing
Of innermost private daydream --
Still, meeting her, you could, bewildered,
But willy-nilly come to halt,
Worshiping in pious awe
Before the sanctuary of beauty.

Young Mare

Young mare,
Honour of the Caucasian breed,
What are you speeding for, spirited one?
For you, too, the time has come:
Do not roll your skittish eye,
Do not fling your feet in the air,
In the field level and broad
Do not gallop wilfully.
Wait: I shall compel you
To humble yourself beneath me:
Into a measured circle I shall direct your run
With a shortened bridle.