

The Complete Poems of Tyutchev In An English Translation by F.Jude

Nature, Love And Politics

Imperturbable form is the outward sign
of nature's utter consonance.
Only our spectral liberty
imparts a sense of dissonance.

Whence this disharmony? How did it arise?
In the general chorus, why this solo refrain?
Why do our souls not sing like the sea
and why must the thinking reed complain?
(The sea is harmony. F. Tyutchev)

..... the great figures in imaginative literature are perpetually contemporary... they never become History. Ancient or modern, they live in the perpetual present of mankind, crowding it with an accumulation of life and a living variety of human experience.
(Essays in Literature and Society. E. Muir)

*** THE POEMS ***

1. DEAR DAD!

On this happy day, a son's tender feelings
seek a gift for you, but what sort?
A bunch of flowers? But the blooms are all over
and meadows and valleys have lost their colours.
Shall I ask the Muses for some verses?
I'll ask my heart.
Here's what my heart has told me:
embraced by your fortunate family,
gentlest of men, father-philanthropist,
true friend of good, protector of the poor,
may your precious days flow in peace!
Your loving children and subjects all around you,
on every face you will see joy.
Thus from on high, the sun
looks down with smile upon flowers
brought to life by its beams.

2. NEW YEAR, 1816

Already the heavens' great luminary,
pouring abundance and light from on high,
has traced its yearly path around the sky,
rising in grandeur in a new domain.
Behold! Clothed in a glittering dawn,
penetrating the whitening vault of these etherial regions,

flying down with his fateful urn
comes the Sun's new son, the New Year!
His forerunner has vanished from the face of the earth
and on the current of revolving ages,
like a drop in the ocean, has drowned in eternity!
This year will pass too. Heaven's statute is sacred.
Oh, Time! Eternity's mobile mirror!
Everything disintegrates, falls beneath your hand.
Your boundaries, your beginning are hidden
from feeble, mortal eyes.

.....
Aeons are born and disappear once again,
one century erased by yet another.
What can flee the wrath of malicious Chronos?
What can stand its ground before this awesome god?
A bleak wind whistles through ruined Babylon!
Beasts graze where Memphis once prospered!
Around Troy's toppled stones
stinging thorns are thickly entwined!

.....
And you, oh son of luxury, mortal voluptuary,
your life of idle bliss and comfort
rolls peacefully on! But you've forgotten, unfortunate man,
that we must all gaze at the shores of fearsome Cocytus.
Your elevated rank, your flatterers, your gold
will not save you from death! Can you really not have seen
how frequently fire-winged lightning
strikes the brows of towering cliffs?

.....
Yet still your greedy hand has dared
to snatch the daily bread from orphans and from widows,
casting families into joyless exile!
Blind man! The path of riches leads to ruin!
The subterranean dwelling has opened before you.
Oh, victim of Tartarus! Oh, victim of the Furies,
the glitter of your splendour, vandal,
will not enchant these dread goddesses!

.....
There you will see the keen axe forever
hanging by the finest hair above your head;
your ulcerated flesh will be garbed
not in purple cloth, but in a blanket of writhing worms!
You will lay your torn members upon a bed
not of the finest, softest down to sweetly lull them,
but no, upon scorching sulphur,
and you will piercingly, eternally howl!
But what is this? This terrifying throng! These bloody shades
maliciously grinning are hurrying towards you!
They died of barbaric persecution;
for this barbarity, await your just reward at their hands!
Suffer, agonise, evil doer, victim of hell's vengeance!
Your forgotten grave is now covered by grass!
The voice which flattered you up here
has forever fallen completely silent!

3. TO TWO FRIENDS

On this blessed day, one of you adopted
the name and virtue of that maiden
who struggled in the name of sacred religion;
nature conferred upon the other one existence.
She engineered it that in both, feelings and deeds
should constitute mutual joy,
setting an example to the fair sex.

.....

Separation oppresses you,
oh true friends! The time will soon come,
that pleasant, sweet, blissful time of meeting,
and in an outpouring of your hearts
you'll finally see her,
forgetting past suffering!

4.

Let envy gnaw Zoilus's heart!
Voltaire, he cannot harm you!
The Muses protect their fostered ones:
into eternity's temple,
Oh wondrous one, they'll lead you.

5. A LETTER FROM HORACE TO MECENATUS INVITING HIM TO

DINNER IN THE COUNTRY (HORACE).

Come, desired guest, my beauty, my joy!
Come, the comradely goblet awaits you here,
the rose garland, the sweetness of tender songs!
Kindled not by the flatterer's hand,
the aromas of anemones and lilies pour fragrantly onto the feast
and baskets full of fruit gladden your eye and palate.
Come, righteous man, protector of the people,
true son of the fatherland, uncompromising friend of monarchs,
fortunate foster child of the Castalian maidens, come into my humble abode!
Let magnificent columns and the gilded masses of temples
entice the greedy gaze of the unthinking crowd.
Leave the careworn city for a while,
recline in the shade of leafy groves. Peace awaits you here.
Under the roof of the rural penates
where everything is beautiful and breathes simplicity,
where the cold glitter of purple and gold are alien,
that's where the comradely goblet is sweet!
The brow furrowed by thought looses its gloomy aspect here.
In the dwelling of our fathers, everything pours joy onto us!
Heavy-footed, heavenly Leo has already stepped
into the regions of heat and along a flaming path
flows across the bright skies! In a sacred, silvan coppice,
where a strange haze fuses with coolness,
where a trembling, quiet light glimmers through the leaves,
a playful freshet barely moves,
whispering in the dusk with the sedge along the banks.
Here, at the hottest times, in front of a dense thicket,
a shepherd and his flock sleep in the cool shade
and in rose bushes gentle zephyrs sleep.
And you, high devotee of Themis, protector of the defenceless,
you spend your days burdened by cares,

and our compatriots' happiness is the good and worthy fruit
 of your unremitting endeavours.
 On their behalf you would like to know what fate has in store,
 but the stern ruler of Earth, Heaven and Hell
 has wreathed the future in a dense, eternal mist.
 Be reverential, men born of earth!
 What? This earthly dust will dare to try to comprehend what is heavenly?
 Will it dare to tear the veil of mystery?
 The very fastest mind will numb in confusion
 and this turbulent sage will be the gods' laughing stock!
 Wandering through this thorny wilderness,
 we can pluck one bloom, catch a fleeting moment.
 The future is for destiny, not us.
 So we leave it to the whim of the higher ones!
 What is time? A swift current rolling the crystal of sapphire waves
 through peaceful glades and along banks luxuriant in abundant swards.
 Across the ripples' silver, the sun's golden light
 plays and slips; but give it an hour and, quickly tempestuous,
 forgetting its shores, forgetting its peaceful movement, it's lost in
 the boundless sea,
 in the shoreless emptiness of vast waters!
 But wait: suddenly from louring storm-masses rain erupts from black depths.
 The water rises, roars, breaks its banks and a furious wind stirs up the waves!
 Blessed, a hundredfold blessed, is he who knows repose, gazing moved at the
 celestial Guide
 which flows to rest in Neptune's domains,
 who, overjoyed, can say to himself: I have lived!
 Tomorrow, through a leaden cloud, let
 the omnipotent god of thunder throw a crimson mantle to
 envelope the darkening air,
 or let sunlight once more scatter through the skies,
 for mortal man it makes no difference, and what the winged
 years have taken away with them from earth's sad face
 into the repository of time
 not even the Father of Nature himself will alter.
 This world is the plaything of malicious fortune.
 She casts her conceited glance at the earth and shakes the entire universe
 through blind whim!
 Unfaithful, today she cast her shadow across me;
 she showers me with riches and honours,
 but tomorrow, suddenly spreading her wings, she will direct her flight at others.
 I am despised. I do not protest and, both sorrowful witness
 and victim of the fateful game, I offer her gifts and garb myself in virtue.
 Wreathed in storms, let the southern wind stir and raise the salty depths
 and fuse the black hills of the sea's seething waters with
 thunder clouds, ripping fragile ships' rigging,
 destroying everything in its fury!
 Protected by the skies of my gentle homeland,
 I shall not burden the gods with prayers;
 but friendship and love, among the waves of life,
 will guide my bark unharmed into harbour.

6.

Omnipotent am I while weak,
 a ruler yet a slave.
 I lose no sleep

if I do good or if I evil wreak.
I give a lot, get little back,
I answer to none but Number One,
and if I want to beat someone,
then I'm the one who gets the smack.

7. URANIA

It has been revealed! Is it not a dream? A new world! A new force,
like a flame, has enfolded my ecstatic spirit!
Who taught me, a youth, to soar like an eagle?
Behold this priceless gift of the Muses! Behold these wings of inspiration!
I fly and this world vanishes before me,
this world, swaddled in a misty, constricting
shroud of turmoil and vanity has gone!
Like the sun's golden beams, the ether has touched my eyes
and blown earthly dust from them.
I behold the dwellings of the all-highest ones
whence, through open doors of mystery,
by the good will of fate, Mnemosyne's daughters flow towards us,
honour, joy, beauty for all races, for every age!

.....

The measureless sea stretches under my feet,
and in the blue light of the gentle waves
the sky is aflame with burning stars,
like the faces of gods in a pure heart.
Expectation is like a quiet trembling.
All around is sacred silence.

.....

Behold! Like the moon emerging from clouds
Urania's islet lifts from silvered foam.
A steady light pours all around me
born of the smile of goddesses.
The sounds of lyres rise higher.
The world drowns in enchantment!

.....

Setting aside the shades of the ethereal cover
and the Charites' magic belt,
Urania has adopted her own image
and a starry crown burns on the goddess!
On earth, what captivated us as a dream
presents itself up here as Truth.

.....

Only here, under a clear sky,
will life's murky current brighten;
only here, forgotten by Aquilon,
it flows deep and bright!
Only here is life's genius fair,
here, where roses of pure pleasure last forever,
is Poetry's garland eternally young!

.....

Like Pharos for enlightened souls and minds,
the temple of the Heavenly One has been erected
and Wisdom invites those captivated by what is heavenly
to taste the nourishing feast laid out up there.
All around the beneficial one, in gold-blossoming dawns,
on high thrones, in the radiance of gods,

there sit in their splendour the saviours of mortals
creators of good, of order, of cities.
Behold eternally youthful Peace, with golden chains
binding families, peoples, monarchs;
Justice with its eternally unmoving scales;
Fear of God, preserver of sacred altars;
and you, Compassion, joy of those who suffer!
You, Loyalty, your brow inclined against the anchor,
Patriotism, the native land's protection,
and cold Valour with burning sword;
you of the ever bright eyes, Patience,
and Labour, you undeviating healer and minion.
Thus do the highest powers hold counsel!

.....

Among them, around them in sacred reverence,
around the slopes of cloud-like mountains,
flowing in mysterious circles,
is the bright choir of the sciences and knowledge.
Alone Urania, like a sun among the stars,
preserves harmony and steers their paths.
At a motion of her mighty staff
the boon of enlightenment flows from land to land.
Where formerly there was dark night,
there is the phenomenon of radiant day;
like a river of stars across the heavens
reaching, she embraces the universe and pours life's gifts
onto the West, the East, the North and the South.
Reveal yourself to me, universe of years which have flown by!
Tell me, Urania where was your first temple,
your throne, your people, teacher of all ages?
The mysterious East! Your turn has been and gone!
Your earliest day has flowed by! From nearby gates
the Sun haughtily passes through the dwelling of its birth
and flows on, languorous and doubting monarch.
Where is Babylon here? Where Thebes? Where is my city?
Where is illustrious Persepolis? Where is Memnon, my herald?
They are not here! Its rays are lost in the steppes
where they are sorrowfully met by the hunter or the ploughman,
fruitlessly digging the burning sands or sadly, bashfully slipping
across the mossy ribs of the pyramids.
Hide yourself, gloomy aspect of frail glory!
The sun hurries into the distance.
On the shores of the Aegean the laurel has bowed
a welcoming head to it, and on the hills of Hellas
Athene's green myrtle has twined itself around its altar.
The blind Singer called it to him in solemn song,
horsemen and steeds, leaders and chariots,
the assembly of gods who left Olympus;
the mortal blows of Ares's hand,
and the sweet songs of shepherds;
Rome rose, and the thunder and sweet-sounding songs of Mars
resounded a hundredfold across Tiber's hills;
and the swan of Mantua, having ploughed up the ill-fated ashes of Troy,
rose and poured his eternal light upon the seas!
But what meets my gaze? Where, where have you hidden yourself,
heavenly one? She flees, like a pale spectre in the dark.
The world's morning star has set.

Everywhere there is chaos and darkness!
 No! The light of the sciences is eternal
 It will not be embraced by the ungovernable gloom.
 Its fruit is imperishable and will not die!
 Urania speaks and brandishes her sceptre, and from iron fetters,
 Italy liberates its pale, sore-covered head,
 tears the bonds of savage serpents, foot on the lion's neck.
 Everything began here! The holy ground,
 valleys, the bowels of mountains, streams, woods
 and you, Vesuvius! You, fiery abyss,
 fearsome beauty of threatening nature!
 You have returned everything which, in insatiable fury,
 frenzied Saturn wanted to hide from us!
 The blossom of Hellas and of Rome has issued from the ashes!
 Once more the sun has begun to flow along its bountiful path.
 Nowhere will the ranks of dreadful battles
 nor spells, nor languid charms,
 nor massed hordes, nor malicious Hell,
 on his most sublime paths, forbid the eagle of Ferrara access:
 on fiery wings he has brought to the temple of Jerusalem
 victory and a crown.
 There the nymphs of the Tajo, there the waves of the Guadalquivir
 flow to meet you, young Singer,
 bringing to us songs from the shores of another world.
 But who are these two geniuses standing there?
 Like radiant seraphim, guardians of the gates of Eden
 and high priests of incomprehensible mysteries,
 one from Britain's waters, the other from the Alps,
 they reach miracle-working hands to each other.
 Alien to what is earthly, they raise their eyes to the heavens
 in the heat of divine reveries!
 Why does the face of the watery depths burn?
 Where do the exultant waters of the Thames hurry?
 Why this sacred trembling, Alps, Appennines?
 Earth, be reverent! Lend your ears, people!
 The immortal singers promise you God:
 one, like the son of thunder, thunders about the Fall,
 the other, like grace, rings out salvation
 and the path which leads to the heavens.
 And behold, amid the snows of the deep land of midnight,
 beneath the glint of cold dawns, beneath the whistling of icy blizzards,
 he rose from Kholmogor, like a strong, high cedar,
 he stands, ascends and takes in everything around him with his strong boughs.
 Lifting to the clouds, his head glistens with immortal fruit
 and there, where gleaming metal is buried,
 there he digs through the soil with his deep roots.
 Thus the Russian Pindar arose! He raised his arms to the skies
 that he may block the path of flaming storms.
 With Minerva's lance he struck the bowels of earth
 and golden treasures flowed forth.
 He stretched his imperial gaze across the sea
 and his light burns, like Castor and Pollux!

 The singer, on the grave of the father, the hero-tsar, laid
 fresh laurels, and he has illuminated Elizabeth's
 priceless days of peace and bliss.
 Then, spilling out, light from the northern lights

was reflected on the steep shores of the Araks
and the geniuses reached their hands to gaze that way
and a new Thebes gleamed red in the rays.
There, there, in the land of the morning star, the singer of Felitsa arose!

.....

He who keeps the secrets of destiny foresaw the hero-tsar in his cradle.
He is now with us! He has flowed down from the heavens,
The assembly of royal geniuses has flown down with him,
has surrounded his throne; God's spirit reposes above him!
The Muses have joyously sung the praises
of You, oh tsar of our hearts - a Man on the throne!

.....

By your all-powerful hand the gates of Janus have closed!
You have protected us with silence. You are our glory, our beauty!
Meekly bowing to your throne, storms sleep on high and in the vales.
And here, where everything flows from your goodness,
here, once again a genius of enlightenment,
gleaming with the light of renewal, the happiness of his days is blessed!
Here he swears sacred oaths that, constant, faithful,
on his glittering height, following the behests and example of the monarch,
he will rise, leaning on Faith, to his divine destination.

8.

Inconstant, watery gulfs finally behind him,
the swimmer attains the longed-for shores.
In the harbour, his flight in the wilderness over,
he re-acquaints himself with joy!
Exulting, will he not then drape
his mighty bark with flowers?
Beneath their luxuriant, shining verdure
will he not hide the scars of dark tempests and seas?

.....

You too with fearless glory sundered
the seas' expanses with your rudder
and today, my friend, stately in peace,
rejoicing, you fly into your haven.
Quicker to the shore, onto friendship's bosom
incline your head, oh singer,
that I might weave sprigs from Apollo's tree
into his foster-child's hair!

9. ON PUSHKIN'S ODE TO FREEDOM

Alight with the fire of freedom
and drowning out the noise of chains,
the spirit of Alcaeus has awoken in the lyre
and slavery's dust has fled it.
Sparks have scattered from the lyre
and in a stream,
like a divine flame, they have fallen
onto the pale brows of tsars.

.....

Happy is he who with a firm, bold voice,
forgetting their rank, forgetting their thrones,
is born to speak sacred truths
to inveterate tyrants!
And you, fostered by the muses,

have been rewarded by this great lot!

.....

Sing and with the power of euphony
soften, touch, transform
autocracy's sold friends
into friends of goodness and beauty!
Singer, trouble not our civic calm,
darken not the royal glitter!
Beneath the kingly velvet,
let your magic strumming
soften hearts, without alarming!

10. CHARON AND KACHENOVSKY

Charon

Are you really from the land of the living, brother?
You're so dry and thin. In truth, I'm ready to swear here and now
that your unclean spirit has long been languishing in Hades.

Kachenovsky

Well, friend Charon. I'm skinny and dry from books
and - why hide it any longer?
I've been full of bile, vengeful and bad-tempered,
my life as useless as a burned out match.

11. SOLITUDE (LAMARTINE)

Glancing from a craggy height, how often
I sit pensive in the shade of dense thickets,
evening's varied pictures unfolding before me.
Here a river foams, the beauty of the valley,
leaving me, fading in the dark distance;
there the slumbering ripples of an azure pond
are bright in deep silence.

Through the dark foliage of trees

I see dusk's last ray still wandering.

The moon slowly rises from the north
on a chariot of clouds and from a lone belfry
drawn-out, indistinct peals are heard all around.

The passer-by listens, and the distant bell
fuses its voice with the day's final sounds.

The world is beautiful! Yet rapture
has no place in my withered heart!

Like an orphaned shade I wander through a foreign land,
dead, the light of the sun powerless to warm me.

My gaze slips sadly from hill to hill,
slowly extinguished in the fearsome void.

Alas, where shall I meet that on which my gaze might rest?

There is no happiness, for all nature's beauty!

And you, my fields, copses and valleys,
you are dead! Life's spirit has flown away from you!

What do you have for me now, joyless scenes?

There is one missing from the world, and the whole world has emptied!

Let day break, let nocturnal shades descend,
both darkness and light are repellent to me.

My fate knows no change
and there's eternal grief in the deeps of my soul!
But is the wanderer to languish long in his prison?
When shall I abandon this earthly dust for a better world,
that world where there are no orphans,
where what you believe in comes to pass,
where there are suns of truth in imperishable skies?
Then, perhaps, there will shine through
the saving object of my secret hopes,
to which my soul here still strives,
which it will embrace only there, in my native land.
How brightly the assembly of stars burns above me,
the divinity's living thoughts!
What a night has thickened upon the earth,
and how dead this earth is in the sight of the heavens!
A storm springs up and a wind, and a desolate leaf is eddied!
And for me, me, like the dead leaf,
it is time to leave life's valley.
Bear me away, tempestuous ones, carry off this orphan!

12. SPRING (DEDICATED TO MY FRIENDS)

Love of the earth, charm of the year,
spring smells sweetly of us!
Nature is throwing a feast for creation,
a coming-together feast for its sons!

.....

The spirit of life, strength and freedom
rises, fans around us!
Joy has poured into our hearts,
like an echo of spring's celebration,
like the life-creating voice of a god!

.....

Where are you, sons of Harmony?
Come, with bold fingers
touch the slumbering strings,
warmed by the bright rays
of love, of ecstasy, of spring!

.....

Just as in full, flaming bloom,
at morning's first, young light
roses glisten and burn;
as the zephyr in its joyous flight
scatters their aroma,
so do you, life-joy, pour yourself into everything.
Singers, let's follow you!
Let our youth soar, friends,
around the bright blooms of good fortune!

.....

This feeble gift of grateful love is yours,
this simple blossom, with little aroma.
You, my mentors, will accept it with a gracious smile.
Thus does a feeble child, as a token of its love,
bring to its mother's breast
the flower it picked in a meadow!

13. A.N.M.

You have no faith in wondrous fancies.
Reason has destroyed everything
and, subjugating to constricting laws
the air, the seas, the land,
like prisoners, has laid them bare.
It has dried to its depths that life
which breathed a soul into the tree,
gave body to the incorporeal!

.....

Where are you, oh ancient peoples?
Your world was a temple for all the gods,
You read the book of Mother Nature
clearly, without glasses!
No, you're not those ancient peoples!
Our age, my friends, is not like theirs.

.....

Oh slave of learned vanity,
fettered by your science!
Vainly, critic, you chase off
their gold-winged dreams.
Believe me - experience is all the proof you need
the magic temple of good fairies
even in a vision, is more joyful
than, in waking life, languishing bored
in your squalid shack!

14. HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE (SCHILLER)

Andromache

Once more, Hector, do you hurl yourself into the storm of battle
where, unapproachable with his sword of steel,
the vengeful Pelides fights furiously?
Who will look out for Hector's son?
Who will teach him his lordly duty,
instil fear of the gods into the baby?

Hector

Am I to pine in burdensome peace?
My heart thirsts for the coolness of battle,
thirsts to avenge Pergamum,
ancient dwelling of my fathers!
If I fall, saviour of my homeland,
I shall gaily go down to the shores of the Styx.

Andromache

In these halls of fame am I fated
to see your sword idle and rusting?
Are all of Priam's kin condemned?
Soon, where there is neither love nor light,
where the dusky Lethe flows,
soon your love will die!

Hector

All my soul's hopes, all my impulses
will be swallowed by the silent waters,

but not Hector's love!
Do you hear? They're rushing off... The flame of battle is burning!
The hour has struck! My son, my wife, Troy!
Endless is the love of Hector!

15.

Along the fateful shore of life,
swept up and left by nature,
a fiery and a lively youth
played, unaware of danger.
The Muse took in the orphaned boy
and he became her family.
She wore a rug of poetry,
luxuriant and lovely.
When he'd matured, nurtured by
the Muse's good example,
a surplus of sensation led
him off to Freedom's temple.
He made no gloomy offerings in
the service of his idol,
just proffering a fiery harp,
just scattering some petals.
There was one more priority,
it's worthy of a mention,
for Cupid played around his head,
demanding his attention.
An arrow was the god's kind gift.
As soon as he was able,
Orpheus's wife became
the subject of a fable.
Reality was just a dream,
his world was what he made it.
Thus he's attracted earthly fame,
thus heaven will reward him.
He's sharp of intellect and quick,
of rich imagination,
and only ever argued to
defend his dissertation.

16.

Do not endow us with the spirit of idle gossip!
Okay. But from now on, we agree,
by virtue of our agreement,
don't expect any prayers from me!

**17. TO WINE'S DETRACTORS (FOR WINE, INDEED, BRINGS JOY TO
MAN'S HEART).**

We're far too quick to criticise.
What's wrong with liking drink?
Drinking wine's a healthy joy
no man of sense denies.

.....

Curses and grief to those who dare
to dispute what's so blatantly clear.
I summon the heavens to the box
to take the oath in this affair.

.....

Our forebear took a bite -
blame his wife or blame the snake -
tasting the forbidden fruit.
We know the rest. It served him right.

.....

Well, I agree, it must be said,
the old man was at fault;
he knew he had the grape
yet let an apple turn his head

.....

Honour and glory has Noah earned,
conducting himself with skill,
becoming friendly with the wine
when water he had spurned.

.....

Neither quarrels nor reproaches
could spoil his drinking pleasure,
the juice of the grape he often poured
into his cup at times of leisure.

.....

All of his best efforts
God himself has blessed.
They both reached an agreement,
divine good will to test:

.....

Should any of his sons not learn
to love to take a drink -
the scoundrel! - Noah intervened:
the blackguard was condemned to burn.

.....

So let us stand and raise a glass
let's sup it out of piety,
so that along with Noah
through heaven's gates we'll pass.

18. AN EPISTLE TO A.V. SHEREMETEV

Your good genius had difficulty
getting you back home,
my brother by blood and in sloth,
away from manoeuvres and training,
barracks, alarms, incarcerations,
from your submissive, military existence.
At home with your friends, in casual dress,
reconciling peace with service,
you have hung up your idle sabre
in the hero-agronomist's garden.
Okay then. Free once more, could you ever
be faithless to your favourite dream?
Inactivity can spell trouble, friend,
If you've no-one to share it with.
Take my friendly advice

(the Oracle would speak in verse
and always convinced its listeners):
amongst the beauties of Moscow
no doubt it's easy to find
a pretty girl of fifteen,
who's bright, who has spirit and serfs.
Leave for a while the plough of Tolstoy,
forget chimerae and rank,
get married and in the world's full sense
be the aide-de-camp of your wife.
Then we'll surrender to inspiration,
Hymen will wake up the Muse.
I'll sacrifice my sloth to her,
just you overcome your own!

19. SONG OF JOY (SCHILLER)

Joy, first-born of creation,
daughter of the great Father,
as a glorifying offering
we devote our hearts to you!
Whatever the whim of the world has separated,
your altar brings together once again,
and the soul you have warmed
drinks love in your rays!

.....

Chorus

Get into one circle, children of God!
Your father is looking at you!
His summoning voice is sacred
and his reward is true!

.....

Whoever has foreseen the sweetness of the heavens,
who has loved on this earth,
who has drawn joy from a dear glance,
share our joy.
Everything which one heart to another's heart
has echoed in a brother's breast;
whoever cannot love, out of the circle
with you, leave in tears!

.....

Chorus

Family of souls! Oh, heavenly ray!
Almighty link!
It leads to the heavens
where the Unknown One dwells!

.....

At the breasts of good nature
everything which breathes drinks Joy!
All creations, all nations
are pulled along behind her.
She has given us friends for times of unhappiness,
the vine, the garlands of the Charities,
sensuality to insects,
to the angel - a place before God.

.....

Chorus

Hearts, what do you revere?
Or is it the creator informing you?
Here there are only shadows. The sun is there.
Seek it above the stars!

.....

Eternal joy feeds
the soul of God's creation
with the mysterious power of fermentation.
The cup of life is ablaze.
It has teased the grass up into the light,
in suns it has developed chaos
and in space, not subservient
to the astronomer, it has poured it!

.....

Chorus

As worlds roll on one behind the other
behind the ever-moving finger,
we flow on to our destination
bravely, like a hero to battle!

.....

In the bright mirror of truth
your image shines in our eyes,
your jewel burns at the bottom
of the bitter phial of experience.
Like a cloud of coolness, you
appear to us amidst difficulties,
you shine like the morning of rebirth
through the cracks in tombs!

.....

Chorus

Believe in the guiding hand!
Our griefs, tears, sighs
are preserved in it like a pledge
and will be redeemed one hundredfold.

.....

Who can comprehend providence?
Who will indicate its path?
In our heart let us seek revelation,
the heart signifies the divinity!
Away from the earth, enmity!
Let soul be kin to soul!
Let us sacrifice vengeance and buy friends,
purple - with the price of sackcloth.

.....

Chorus

We have forgiven our foes.
In the book of life there are no debts;
there, in the sanctum of worlds,
God judges how we have judged!

.....

Joy swells the grape,
joy fires the cups,
softens the heart of the savage,
enlivens the breast of the despairing!
The foam sparkles up to the sky.

Hearts are fuller.
Friends, brothers - onto your knees!
This cup is for the all-bountiful one!

.....

Chorus

You, whose thought gave birth to spirits,
you, whose glance has burned worlds!
Let us drink to you, great God!
Life of worlds and luminary of souls!

.....

To the weak - brotherly service,
to the good - brotherly love,
the loyalty of oaths - to friend and foe,
as a tribute to duty - all the heart's blood!
The bold voice of the citizen
to the council of earthly gods.
Solemnise the sacred deed.
Eternal shame to his enemies.

.....

Chorus

Our hand to yours, father,
we stretch for all eternity!
Give eternity to our oaths!
Our oaths are the hymn of hearts!

20. TEARS

O lacrimarum fons....

Friends, I love to let my eyes caress
the sparkling, deep red of the wine,
or peer through the foliage
at the scented ruby of the vine.

.....

I love to watch creation deep
in spring time in sweet fragrance
when the world is slumbering sweetly
and is smiling in its sleep!

.....

I love the face of a pretty girl
ablaze in the breeze of spring,
her cheeks folding into dimples,
the sensual silk of her curls.

.....

But what are Venus's delights,
the juice of the grape and roses' aromas,
compared to you, oh sacred well of tears,
the dew of the god's morning light!

.....

Heavenly beams play upon them
and, refracted in fiery showers,
on the storm-clouds of existence
they sketch rainbow-living colours.

.....

And should the pupils of mortal man
be brushed by the wings of the angel of tears,
then the mist will vanish in tearful swirls

and a sky of seraph faces
will before our eyes unfurl.

21. FROM A FOREIGN LAND (HEINE)

In the gloomy north, on a bleak crag,
a lone, white cedar stands in the snow
and has fallen sweetly asleep in the frosty mist,
and the blizzard lulls its sleep.

.....

It dreams all the time of a young palm
which, in the East's distant regions,
beneath a burning sky, on a scorched hill,
stands and blossoms, alone.

22. (HEINE)

Be open with me, my love:
are you some spectre
of the sort occasionally produced
by the poet's fiery mind?

.....

No, I can't believe that: the dear light
of these cheeks, of these eyes,
this little angel mouth,
no poetry will conjure that up.

.....

Basilisks and vampires,
the winged horse and the toothed serpent,
these are his idol's dreams,
this is what the poet's good at dreaming up.

.....

But you, your airy figure,
the magic colour of your cheeks,
this artfully submissive glance,
no poet will come up with that.

23. TO MY FRIENDS (ON SENDING THEM SCHILLER'S SONG OF JOY)

Friends, what the divine one sang
in a fiery outburst of freedom,
in the full emotion of Existence,
when to nature's feast
the Singer, her favoured son,
called all nations into one circle;
and with an exulting soul,
in his eyes, a life-creating ray,
from the foaming cup of Genius,
drank the health of people!

.....

Should I then sing this sacred hymn
far from those close to my heart,
in anguish which I cannot share,
to sing of joy on my silent lyre?

Gaiety has lost its voice in her,
its playful strings
are soaked by tears of sadness and torn by Separation!
But, friends, you're no stranger to inspiration!
In a second's heartfelt ecstasy
involuntarily I'd forgotten my lot
(a transient, but sweet oblivion!)
I flew in soul to what has taken its course
and sang of joy while I thought about you.

24. TO N.

Your dear gaze, with innocent passion filled,
the golden dawn of your heavenly feelings
serve as a silent reproach to them,
at propitiation it is unskilled.

.....
These hearts in which there is no truth
flee, my friend, as they would flee a judgement,
fearing as they fear childhood memories
the loving gaze of your youth.

.....
What is good for me are your eyes,
like the water of life, in the deeps of my being,
your living gaze which lives in me -
deep down I need it, like breath, like the sky.

.....
Heavenly, shining only in the skies,
such is the light of souls in bliss,
During nights of sin, this pure flame
burns in a fearsome abyss.

25. TO NISA

Nisa, Nisa, just get lost!
My friendship means nothing to you.
You played with me and then you tossed
me away from those who admire you.

.....
Indifferent and carefree,
you gullible little tease,
you do like laughing at me.
My gift of true love couldn't please.

.....
Nisa, Nisa, I'd have been true,
but you prefer to play the field.
It seems my feelings just never appealed.
Nisa, I've just had enough of you!

26. THE SONG OF THE NORSE WARRIORS (HERDER)

Cold, bright,
day has awakened.
The early cock

has shaken its wings.
Warriors, leap up!
Rise, oh friends!
Brisker, brisker
to the feast of swords,
to the fight!

.....
Our leader is before us!
Be men, oh friends,
and behind the mighty one
let us strike like a storm!

.....
We shall hurtle like a whirlwind
through clouds and thunder,
to the sun of victory
following the eagle!

.....
Where the battle is darkest, the warriors closer,
where shields are spliced, where swords are woven together,
there he will strike, the all-scattering Thor,
and a fiery-starred path burning with blood
he will slash through to his men in the iron night.
After him, after him, into the ranks of the enemy,
bolder, friends, after him!
Like mountain masses, like a sea of ice,
we shall tear through and constrain them!

.....
Cold, bright,
day has awakened.
The early cock
has shaken its wings.
Warriors, leap up!

.....
It is not a foaming cup of fragrant mead
which the rosy morning hands to the heroes;
nor does the love and conversation of voluptuous women
warm your soul and enliven your life;
but you, renewed by the coolness of sleep,
will be carried up by the waves of bloody battle!

.....
Warriors, leap up!
Death or victory!
To the fight!

27. THE GLEAM

Have you heard an Aeolian harp
deep in the night
carelessly brushing midnight,
sleeping strings waking
to trouble the silence,
resounding, fading fast,
as if a final cry of anguish
had echoed there and died?
The breeze's every breath
stings them to sorrow:

perhaps a lyre fell to earth,
 playing dirges for lost bliss.
 Captive, our souls soar in immortal skies,
 gathering memories
 as we gather the dear shades of friends,
 clasping them tight against our breasts.
 How readily we believe with living faith,
 how glad and bright our hearts become:
 you'd think the sky had turned to ocean in our veins,
 had coursed and swept us through them!
 Such a lot cannot be ours.
 Strangers to the sky soon tire.
 We are common dust. We cannot breathe such fire.
 With a moment's effort we barely manage
 a short-lived, troubled, trembling glance
 from the window of our daily dream,
 half-rising, staring round the sky.
 The sky is weighty on us.
 A single beam can blind us and we'll fall.
 Peaceful sleep does not await us.
 Exhausting dreams reclaim us.

28. IN MY ALBUM FOR MY FRIENDS (BYRON)

As the traveller's attention carries
 on cold tombstones,
 so let my friends' attention go
 to the writing of a familiar hand!

 In many, many years
 it will remind them of a former friend:
 He's no longer with you,
 but his heart is buried there!

29. SAKONTALA (KALIDASA/GOETHE)

What the young year gives to flowers -
 their maidenly blush;
 what the mature year gives to fruit -
 their royal purple;
 what pampers and gladdens the glance,
 like a pearl, growing in the seas;
 what warms and enlivens the soul,
 like omnipotent nectar:
 the whole colour of the treasure box of dream,
 the whole, full colour of creation,
 and, in a word, a sky of beauty
 in rays of imagination,
 everything, everything Poetry has poured
 into you alone, Sakontala.

30. DECEMBER 14TH., 1825

Tyranny itself seduced you.
Its sword has mown you like reeds.
The Law is incorruptibly impartial.
The Law's infallible in word and deed.
Disloyalty is shunned by our people.
They'll scorn your names. Abuse will heap.
Your sons will never know your exploit,
hidden in time, a rotten carcass buried deep!

.....
Victims of foolish notions!
Perhaps you had a youthful vision!
Perhaps you thought you saw
your thin blood trickling,
covering the ice-caps
as if alone it could thaw
that age-old polar face.
Why, it would scarce have time to sparkle
when up there'd gust a breath of iron winter
to murder every tiny trace!

31. (HEINE)

Sadness stole into my heart and I vaguely
recalled the past;
everything was so cosy then,
and people lived as in a dream.

.....
Now it's as if the world has disintegrated:
everything's upside down, everyone's been knocked over.
The Lord-God in his Heaven's dead
and Satan's expired in Hell.

.....
It's as if people live in the world reluctantly.
Everywhere there's grumbling, everywhere there's dissent.
Were it not for a crumb of love in a person,
I'd have long ago left this world.

32. QUESTIONS (HEINE)

Above the sea, the wild northern sea,
a young man stands,
anguish in his breast, doubt in this mind,
and gloomily he asks the waves,
Oh settle life's riddle for me,
this agonisingly ancient riddle
over which hundreds, thousands of heads
in Egyptian, Chaldaean caps
embroidered with hieroglyphs,
in turbans, mitres and skull-caps,
be-wigged and shaven,
hosts of poor, human heads
have spun and withered and sweated.
Tell me, what is the significance of man?
Where is he from, where is he going,

who lives above the starry vault?
As they did before, the waves roar and grumble,
and the wind blows, driving on the clouds,
and the stars gleam cold and bright.
The fool stands, waiting for his answer!

33. THE SHIPWRECKED MAN (HEINE)

Hope, love, everything, everything has perished!
A pale, naked corpse
thrown up by the angry sea,
I lie on the shore,
on the wild, bare shore!
Before me is the watery wilderness,
behind me, grief and misfortune,
and above me the clouds indolently wander,
the sky's monstrous daughters!
Into misty vessels they scoop the sea water
and with their burden, tired,
drag themselves into the distance
and once again pour it into the sea!
Joyless and endless labour,
and vain, like my life!
The sea roars, the sea bird moans!
The past is wafted into my soul.
Past dreams, extinguished visions
rise, tormentedly joyful!
A woman lives in the north!
A beautiful image, regally beautiful!
Her figure, shapely as a palm's,
is wrapped all around in white, voluptuous material;
the dark billow of her luxuriant curls
flows like a night of blissful gods
from a head crowned with plaits
and softly flutters in light ringlets
around her pale, dear face,
and from her dear, pale face
her frank, fiery eyes
shine like a black sun!
Oh fiery black sun,
oh how many, many times in your rays
have I drunk the wild flame of ecstasy,
drunk, grown numb, shuddered,
and with heavenly, dovelike meekness
a smile has fanned across your lips,
and your proudly dear mouth
has breathed words as quiet as moonlight
and as sweet as the fragrance of roses,
and the spirit reviving in me has taken flight
and soared like an eagle to the sun!
Be silent, birds, stop roaring, sea.
Everything has perished, happiness and hope,
hope and love! I'm alone here,
thrown up onto the desolate shore by the storm.
I lie prostrate and with my glowing face
I scrabble the wet sand of the sea's depths!

34. (HEINE)

As the bright moon sometimes
sails out from the clouds,
so, alone in the night of the past,
a joyous ray shines to me.

.....

We were all sitting on deck,
carried along by the Rhine,
the green banks
stretching out before us,

.....

and at the feet of a charming lady
I sat reflective,
and on her dear, pale face
the quiet breeze flamed.

.....

Children sang, played tambourines,
there was no end to the noise,
and the sky became bluer,
and the heart more spacious.

.....

As in a dream, flying by went
mountains and castles on hills
and they shone, reflected
in my dear companion's eyes.

35. THE SPIRIT'S GREETING (GOETHE)

On an old tower by a river
the spirit of a knight stands

and as soon as he sees my boats,
he sends them a greeting:

.....

Blood once boiled in this breast,
my fist was made of lead,
and there was a hero's marrow in my bones,
and I could knock the goblet back!

.....

I stormed through half my life,
and other half I wasted:
and you sail on, sail on, little boat,
wherever the current takes you!

36. FROM WILHELM MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP (GOETHE)

1

He who has not eaten tears with his bread,
who has not in life sat entire nights
crying on his bed,

is unfamiliar with the heavenly powers.

.....

They lure us into existence,
make a crime of weakness,
and after it they torture us to death.
No misdemeanour goes unpunished on this earth!

2

He who would be a stranger in the world
will soon be one.

Ah, people have someone to love,
what are our needs to them!

.....

So! What am I to you?
What's my misfortune to you?
It's mine alone
and I'll not be split from it!

.....

As the lover steals hidden to his darling:
Answer me, love, are you along?
so by night and day wandering
around me goes anguish.
Sadness is all around me!
Ah, is it only in the grave
that I'll manage to get away from them all?
In the grave, in the damp earth,
there they'll throw me!

37. HEGIRA (GOETHE)

West, North and South are crumbling,
thrones, kingdoms are being destroyed.
Get yourself off to the distant East,
drink the patriarchal air!
In games, songs, feasting
renew your existence!

.....

There I shall penetrate in secret
to the hidden sources
of primeval generations
which directly hear
the voice of divine commands
without racking their minds.

.....

Sanctifying the memory of our forebears,
where foreign ways are sickened,
where balance has been preserved in everything
and thought is narrow, faith is spacious,
where the strong, esteemed word
is like a living revelation!

.....

Now with shepherds beneath copses,
now in the blossoming oasis
I shall rest with a caravan,
trading in aromatics.
I shall keep an eye on all movements
from the desert into the settlements.

.....
The sacred songs of
will sweeten the steep paths:
their vociferous guide,
singing in the pure firmament,
awakens the late stars
and irks the camels' steps.

.....
Now I shall be intoxicated by indolence in baths,
true to the teaching of :
my lady friend tossing aside her veil,
shaking ambergris from her curls,
and the poet's honeyed tones
rouse desire in heaven's maidens!

.....
Do not impute this haughtiness
to superstition;
know that every word of the poet
in a light swarm, greedy for light,
knocks at the gates of paradise,
imploping the gift of immortality!

38. A SPRING STORM

I love May's first storms:
chuckling, sporting spring
grumbles in mock anger;
young thunder claps,
a spatter of rain and flying dust
and wet pearls hanging
threaded by sun-gold;
a speedy current scampers from the hills.
Such a commotion in the woods!
Noises cartwheel down the mountains.
Every sound is echoed round the sky.
You'd think capricious Hebe,
feeding the eagle of Zeus,
had raised a thunder-foaming goblet,
unable to restrain her mirth,
and tipped it on the earth.

39. NAPOLEON'S TOMB

Spring's soul brings nature back to life
and everything shines, celebrating peace:
the skies' azure, the blue sea,
that wondrous tomb, the cliff!
All around are trees in thick, new colour,
their shadows, in the general silence,
barely rippled by the breathing of the waves
on the marble, warmed by spring.

.....
A thunder of his victories long ago fell silent,
but their echo still resounds.

.....
A great shade has filled man's mind,

and his solitary shadow upon a wild shore,
alien to everything, consoled by sea-birds' shrieks,
listens to the ocean's roar.

40. HIDE AND SEEK

There's her harp in its usual corner.
By the window, carnations and roses.
On the floor a midday sunbeam dozes.
Time's up. So where's she hiding?

.....

Who'll help me catch this teaser?
Come on out, sylph! Where's your lair?
I can feel your magical nearness
abundantly poured into the air.

.....

Carnations peak slyly, nestling beside
more fragrant, warmer roses,
but I know who's wrapped in your blossoms,
I know who you're trying to hide.

.....

Was that your harp I heard?
Do you think you can hide in its golden strings?
You've brought the metal to life!
I can feel it shuddering as it rings.

.....

See the dust dancing in the sun's shimmers,
Like living sparks in kindred flames!
Stop whirling, dear guest,
magical being. How can I not know you're there?

41. A SUMMER EVENING

Earth nods its head.
A glowing sphere rolls
into the ocean, which enfolds
the calm, evening red.

.....

Bright stars start rising,
heads still moist.
They take the sky and hoist
it far over the horizon.

.....

Sweetness shudders through the land
as if, freed from the heat,
nature'd scooped spring waters in her hand
and splashed her burning feet.

42. OLEG'S SHIELD

Allah, pour your light on us!
Oh beauty and strength of the faithful!
Terror of the two-faced heathens!
Your prophet is Mohammed!

.....
Oh, our fortress and our bulwark!
Great God, lead us now
as once, from the desert,
you led your chosen people!

.....
Deep midnight! All is still!
Suddenly from behind a cloud the moon shines down
and there above the gates of Istanbul
it lights up Oleg's shield!

43. A VISION

There is an hour at night when all the world is silent.
Sights are seen. Miracles are done.
The living horse and chariot of creation
stampede the heavens in unbridled run.

.....
Night draws in, thick Chaos heavy on the seas.
Oblivion presses on the earth, like Atlas.
Alone on the Muses' virgin soul
in seer-dreams the gods inflict unease.

44. BYRON (ZEDLITZ)

1

Come in with me - this dwelling is empty.
The gods have let this house go to ruin.
Their altar has been cold a long time and there's been no change
for silence standing guard here. On the threshold
the attendant does not meet us with a welcome.
Only the walls echo our voices.
Why, oh son of the Muse,
most favoured son, you, endowed with the gift
of the inextinguishably fiery word,
why did you flee your own roof?
Why did you betray your father's hearth?
Ah, and where, in untimely repose,
did this tempest which carried you off, speed you?

2

So, a mighty dweller once lived here.
Here he breathed song and his breathing
did not seem like that of the playful babbling
of the breeze in the fragrant bird-cherry.
No, his song, more threatening than the thundering clouds,
like divine anger, now brooding, now bursting into flame,
hurtled across the misty firmament.
Suddenly above a green cornfield or an unfading garden
it tore off the rivets
and spewed out darkness and ice and flame,

scorched with fire and furrowed with hail.
Only in those spots where the cloud had torn
did the sky's azure smile charmingly!

3

They say the frenzied singing of demons
drove those who listened mad.
Thus it was with him, like an unearthly force,
it tore up all the depths of his souls
and on the very bed it awakened crime.
Breathing stopped, the heart ached
and something constricted the breast.
Like a layer of air, thinning all around,
he sucked the living blood from our veins
and in the struggle we ran out of strength
and could not throw off the tyranny of the charm,
while he himself, as if for a laugh,
refused to wave his staff and break the fascination!

4

And is it any wonder that a memory of the sublime
visited your soul with involuntary sadness!
Fate did not create a swan of you,
dipping its wing into the crimson waves
when the sunset burns above the currents
and it swims, admiring itself,
between a dual dawn.
You were an eagle and from your native crags
where you wove your nest, and in it, as if in a cradle,
storms and blizzards lulled you.
You plunged into the skies' depths, inexhaustible,
soared high above sea and earth,
but your eye sought only corpses!

5

Ill-fated spirit! Like the glow of a conflagration
was your bloodily-dull mirror,
glittering in luxuriant, fresh bloom,
so wildly reflecting the world and life!
With the imprint of the sacred gift upon your brow
and with the sceptre of power at this unearthly council
in this confused world, you loved
to send visions to trouble our mundane lives!
In yourself, as if in an allegory,
a menacing legend was resurrected for us,
but our gaze cannot recognise you:
are you a titan, whose heart is the food of the raven,
or are you the raven, tearing the titan?

6

He abandoned the dwelling of his fathers,
where their silent shades wander,
where dear pledges have remained,
and just as all day long the waves are stirred by the wings
of the sea bird, dweller of bleak cliffs,
so the gods decreed that he should pass
along life's road,
nowhere finding a peaceful, bright haven!
Vainly battling with people, with himself,
he strove to grasp earthly happiness by force.
Above him was Fate, inimical omnipotent!

He followed it up to snowy summits,
dropped down into dales, swam across sea-troughs!

7

Fugitive from his native land, the bard now hurtles
to meet the sun, riding the tempestuous element,
where Lisbon, glowing in the burning sky,
is embraced by the golden crown of the azure bay,
where the earth burns fragrantly
and where fruits, ripening on dusty boughs,
are yet more fragrant, fresher.

Then he uttered a greeting to you,
country of love, of heroism, of adventures,
where even now their mellifluous genius
seems fanned by the magic light
of Alhambra's patterned colonnades
or the sweet-scented thickets of Granada!

8

Now laying out a devout funeral feast,
surrounded by a swarm of departed spiritis,
anguished he walks around that plain,
where the world cast its die in glorious battle,
where this fearsome, iron justice was meted out!

This land, branded by fate,
beneath the keen foot
still trembles involuntarily even now,
like a tundra of blood. Here, in dreadful torments,
ranks of valiant hearts have been trodden into the ground
and their ash lies layered around the plain.

Enemies, they fell quiet together,
some thirsting for, some thrilling in their vengeance!

9

The bard goes on and sees before him
the grape-bearing, eternally youthful Rhine,
and here and there, on vine-covered heights,
a castle flashes, even today fanned
by magic, mistily golden legends!
And there in the distance, shining and cold,
a massive titan has risen up,
Switzerland! There, life is as if behind a fence.
The horn blows, torrents sing more freely,
in the mountains, as if in the chalice, lakes are deep,
there is light on the hills, in the valleys cool shade
and above it all icy heights,
now pale, now fiercely alive!

10

Then from the heights, where waters separate
into the wide, southern plains,
hurling their currents as if going to a feast,
whence more than once, like glacial avalanches
northern tribes have torn down
into Italy, his own estate,
he takes his inspiration.
The heavenly spirit moves around this land of wonders,
he rocks the high laurel and dark myrtle,
he breathes beneath the vaults of bright mansions,
takes away from blossoming breasts the scent of roses
and rustles like a transparent blanket

above the slumbering, ruined past!

11

But to the blossoming, deserted East
the singer was drawn by an all-powerful passion,
to his imagination's favourite land!
Once more before his demise he saw
this world of violence, indolence, voluptuousness,
where life and destruction embraced
in luxuriant desolation
and like friends in the evening light
mountain peaks grew, where once there lived happy brigandage.
There, beyond the cliff, is the pirate's white sail,
here the horn of the moon, burning on a mosque,
and the pure remains of the Parthenon
against the virginal rosiness of the heavens.

12

But you annulled the union of this creation,
spirit of freedom, immortal element!
Battle flared up between Despair and Power!
Blood flowed like spring waters
and in the night the earth drank them without a twinge of conscience.
Only a glowing, like a lamp above a grave,
burned above it on high.
And will it happen soon - only providence knows -
will dawn come and will the tempestuous gloom disperse?
But let the young day brighten with love
on the spot where the spirit of the singer wanders,
where in the gloaming of sickly hope
death closed his earthly eyelids!

13

The singer faded away on the sacrificial altar of battle!
But nowhere did his song fall silent,
though from his breast, torn by passions,
more than once it flowed bloodily;
the magic staff never fell from his hand,
but it moved only the powers of hell!
At odds with the heavens
the high divinity of suffering
was for him a hostile riddle
and, drinking to his fill from the healing cup,
he thirsted for poison, not for healing.
His eyes stared into the subterranean horror.
He turned his back on the starry glory of the night!

14

Thus he was, mighty, majestic,
exulting critic of creation!
But is his lot worthy of envy?
Like the parental gift of existence
he acquired that which was conferred by fame!
But was he, appropriated by this demon,
either fortunate or at peace?
The shining of the stars, the happy beam of the morning star
only rarely blew away the gloom of his soul
where storms howled.
He has quietened now, a burned out volcano.
And the late luminary of immortality
sadly looks down on him from the night skies.

45. THE MEANS AND THE END

I'm in no hurry to receive garlands from you,
though I am partial to your praises
when I meet them along the way.

.....

Although the ballast does not determine
where and how the ship will float,
it certainly alleviates its voyage.

46. TO THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS I

Oh Nicholas, conqueror of peoples,
you have justified your name! You have conquered!
You, the warrior raised up by the Lord,
have restrained the fury of his foes.

The end of cruel trials has come,
the end of unspeakable torments has come.

Exult, Christians!

Your God, the god of grace and battle,
has wrenched the bloody sceptre from unclean hands.

.....

It is to you, to you, the ambassador of his commands,
to whom God Himself has entrusted His fearsome sword
to lead his people from the shades of death
and forever sever the age-old chain.

Above your chosen head, oh tsar,
grace has shone like a sun!

Paling before you,
the moon is wreathed in darkness.
The Koran will not hold sway.

.....

Hearing your wrathful voice from far away,
the Ottoman gates trembled.

At the mere wave of your hand
they will fall to the foot of the cross.

Complete your work, the salvation of people.

Say, Let there be light! and there will be light!

Enough bloodshed, tears shed,
enough beaten woman and children,
enough has Mohammed cursed Christ!

.....

Your soul does not thirst for earthly fame,
your gaze is not fixed on the mundane.
But He, oh tsar, by whom powers are kept in place,
has pronounced sentence on your foes.

He himself turns his face from them.

Blood has long since washed away their evil power.

Above their heads the angel of death patrols.

Istanbul retreats.

Constantinople rises once again.

47. INSOMNIA

Monotonous dying of the hours:
midnight is telling a tedious tale
in a foreign language we can't fail
to recognise as ours.

.....

Who can claim it never befell
him to hear time's muffled groans
stab his soul at night, the drone,
when all's quiet, of a prescient farewell?

.....

It's as if the world had been orphaned
by irresistible fate chased and caught,
and nature, after we had fought,
had marooned us, each on his separate island.

.....

Before us there stands our existence,
a spectre on earth's edge,
and with our friends and with our age
it pales into the distance.

.....

While under the sun there is a birth,
a new and youthful tribe's begotten
and it has long since been forgotten
that we, our friends, our age, were ever on this earth!

.....

At times, performing some gloomy rite,
we can hear metallic sighs
bemoaning our demise
in the silence of the night.

48. MORNING IN THE MOUNTAINS

Morning smiles blue across country
refreshed by rainstorms over night.
Dew-bespeckled, through the mountains
a valley's a snail-track of light.
Above it all the soaring summits
are half in misty curtains caught,
as if they were the airy ruins
of castles sorcerers had wrought.

49. SNOWY MOUNTAINS

Midday soars.
It pauses, now holds steady.
It sears the grasslands,
skims and scalds the rills.
Its sheer rays strike dusky woods
which spread beneath the haze.
Below, there is a steel-bright mirror.
Blue currents in the lake invite quick streams
to leave the heat, to scamper by smooth boulders
and plunge beneath the waters into kindred dreams.
While in blissful, fragrant sweetness,
spread-eagled in the sweltering haze,

far overhead, like gods we know as cousins,
above the land that's left to die,
the mountains' icy peaks play with
the fiery blueness of the sky.

50. THE FINAL CATAclySM

When nature's final hour strikes
and earthly matter has disintegrated,
the visible universe will be flooded.
In the waters God's face will be reflected.

51. TO N. N.

You know how to love.
You're such a good actress,
and when we're in a crowd
(and they can't see us!)
and my leg touches yours,
you answer me without a blush.
You always look so absent
and you're callous.
As your breasts move,
as you glance around and smile,
that hateful guardian of a husband
admires your servile beauty!
Thanks to people, thanks to fate
you've learned the cost of secret joys.
You've learned about the world,
that world which will betray us!
Treason flatters you!
Virginity's first blush has left
your youthful cheeks,
as morning sunshine ravishes young roses
of their sweet-smelling soul.
So be it!
In scorching summer heat
our feelings are more flattered,
our eyes more tempted
by parting a vine in the shade
and watching the grape,
through dense, tight leaves,
oozing its blood.

52.

The happy day was loud
and streets shone with crowds
and shadows, cast by evening cloud,
flew across bright buildings.
From time to time the noise would float
to me, sounds of heavenly existence;
they'd merge into a single note,
a hundred sounds, loud but muffled.
The day moved on. I fell asleep.

Spring's languor exhausted me.
Was my oblivion fleeting? Was it deep?
More strange was the awakening.
The hubbub in the streets had stilled.
Silence reigned completely.
On the walls, where evening shadows milled,
something somnolent was glittering.
Through my window panes there gleamed
a pallid star which kept a secret,
and as it peered at me it seemed
it was a guardian of my slumber.
It seemed to me as if I'd been
abducted by some loving genie
which craftily and quite unseen
had sped me to a land of shadow.

53. EVENING

Melting in the air above the valley,
distant bells are chiming
like flocks of flapping cranes,
dying away in the rustle of leaves,
bright, like the swelling sea of spring,
crystal-like, like day at a distance,
while faster, quieter,
shadow lies around the valley.

54. MIDDAY

Misty noon breathes idly.
Idly waters play.
Pure skies are sun-scorched.
Cloud-wisps idly melt away.
Clasped in hot embrace,
nature drowns in sultry doze.
Pan himself seeks calm,
deep in the quiet of caves,
deep in nymph-repose.

55. THE SWAN

Eagle, plumb the clouds,
talk to lightning,
drink sunlight
into your motionless eyes,
but envy the swan,
the pure, white swan.
In a dual abyss,
the deity has clothed you
in the pure element,
that god which cherishes omniscient vision,
so that the swan is captured,
surrounded on all sides
by the full, starry glory of the sky.

56. **SCENES FROM A JOURNEY (HEINE)**

It's going to be a nice day , my friend said,
glancing at the sky from the window of the carriage.

Yes, it'll be a nice day,
my praying heart repeated,
and it shivered in sadness and bliss!
It will be a nice day! The sun of freedom
will burn more animatedly and hotly now than
the aristocracy of nocturnal luminaries!
And the happiest tribe will bloom,
conceived in arbitrary embraces,
not on the iron bed of coercion
beneath the strict customs scrutiny
of the spiritual police, and in these souls,
free-born, there will flare boldly
the purest fire of ideas and feelings
incomprehensible to us, by nature slaves!

.....
Thus I thought and climbed from my carriage
and with a sincere, morning prayer
stepped onto the dust, sanctified by immortality!
As beneath a high, triumphal vault
of vast clouds, the sun rose
victorious, bold and bright,
announcing a fine day to nature.
But at the sight I was so melancholy,
like the moon, still a visible shade
pale in the sky. Poor moon!
In the deep night, alone, orphaned,
it completed its bitter path
while the world slept and only
owls, apparitions and bandits caroused.
And today before the young day, rising in glory,
rays ringing forth joy
and shot through with the dawn's purple,
it runs off. Just one more glance
at the luxuriant universal light
and like a fine wisp of smoke it flies from the sky.

.....
Ah, equally incomprehensible to them
will be that night in which their fathers
joylessly languished their entire lives
and carried on a despairing battle, a cruel one,
against fowl owls and subterranean vampires,
monstrous things begotten of Erebus!
Ill-fated warriors, all the spirit's strength,
all the heart's blood we have exhausted in battle,
and pale, prematurely decrepit,
the late day of victory will light us up!
The fresh immortality of the young sun
will not enliven exhausted hearts,
will not bring fire once more to dulled cheeks!
We shall hide before them, like the pale moon!

I don't know nor do I seek to foresee
what the Muse has in store for me! The poet's laurels
may or may not grace my gravestone!
Poetry was to my soul
a childlike-divine toy
and the judgement of others perturbed me little.
But place a sword on my tomb, my friends!
I was a warrior! I fought for freedom,
and served her in truth and faith
in her sacred battle all my life!

57.

You saw him in polite company,
one moment happy,
getting all his own way,
then gloomy, absent,
unsociable, full of mysterious thoughts.
Such was the poet. You despised the poet!

.....
Look at the moon: all day it seems
exhausted, a pitiful wraith.
Wait till night falls,
then you see this radiant god
enfolding sleeping corses in its beams!

58.

Among society's gossips,
in the pointless noise of day,
at times my gaze, my movements, feelings, words
just can't be happy, don't know what to say.
Forgive me, love!
Look, in daytime misty-white,
the bright moon barely glimmers,
but let night come: it pours into a clear mirror
the fragrant, amber nectar of its light!

59. FROM FAUST, PART 1 (GOETHE)

1
As in days gone by, before you is heard
the day's luminary in the system of the planets
and along its predetermined course
thundering, it completes its flight!
Seraphs marvel at it,
but till now who has comprehended it?
As on the first day, incomprehensible
are the deeds, Almighty, of your hands!
.....
And swiftly, with miraculous swiftness,
the earth's globe turns,
replacing the quiet light of the sky
with the deep darkness of night.

The waves roar over the sea's abyss,
gouging out its rocky shore,
and the chasm of waters with its cliffs
the earth in its fast flight bears away!

.....

And incessantly storms howl,
and fling the earth from region to region,
and oppress the waters and plough up the air,
and weave a mysterious chain.
The precursor-destroyer has flared up,
tearing itself from the clouds, thunder has roared,
but we in the world, all-retainer,
praise your day and sing peace.
The seraphs are amazed at you!
The heavens' praise thunders to you!
As on the first day, incomprehensible
are the deeds, Lord, of your hands!

2

Who called me?
Oh, horrible sight!
With a powerful and persistent charm
you gnawed my magic circle and not in vain, and now ...
Your aspect benumbs me!
Was that not you praying, like one in a frenzy,
to see my face and hear my voice?
I inclined myself to your persistent call
and here I stand before you! What despicable fear
has suddenly possessed your soul, titan?
Is this the breast whose creative power
created a world, nourished and cultivated it
and, hoping for unterrestrial valour,
with indefatigable effort
strove to bring itself up to us, the spirits?
Is this you, Faust? And was that your voice,
pestering me with despairing prayer?
You, Faust? This poor, helpless dust,
imbued throughout with my breath,
shuddering to the very depths of his soul?
Do not dispirit my head with this fiery contempt!
You will not turn it aside!
Yes, spirit, I am Faust, I am like you, I am your equal!
The tempest of events and the swell of the fates
I turn around,
I raise up,
I hover here, I hover there, high and low!
Death and Birth, Will and Fate,
waves in conflict,
elements in dispute,
life in its changes,
the eternal, solitary current!
Thus does the fateful fabric hum on my loom,
weaving for God a living garment!
With what insuperable affinity,
immortal spirit, you attract me to yourself!
Only to that nature you have dreamed up

are you alike - not to me!

3

What do you want of me,
what do you seek in my dust?
Sacred voices, you sing out there,
there, where hearts are both purer and more tender.
I hear the news, but can I believe it?
Oh faith, faith, kindred mother of miracles,
shall I dare raise my glance there,
whence the blissful message flies?
Ah, but accustomed from childhood to it,
this kindred sound, this masterful sound
still entices me to existence!
It would happen that the heavens would kiss
me in the silence of Sunday.
I heard the trembling of sacred bells
in the depths of my soul,
and the prayer was living sweetness to me!
The soul's urge to be one with heaven
carried me off to woods and dales
and, drenched in warm tears,
I created a new world for myself.
About happy youth's game,
about bright spring would this glad news be.
Ah, and at that solemn hour
the recollection of them would master my soul!
Sing out, voices, play again, sacred hymn!
My tear flees! Earth, I am yours once more!

4

Why destroy in empty depression
the blissful possession of this hour?
See how evening shines and scatters around
the huts with their greenery.
The day is through, and to other skies
the day's luminary brings life.
Oh, where are the wings that I might fly after it,
sticking close to its rays, following its path?
A beautiful world lies at my feet
and, eternally evening, laughs.
All the heights glow, there is peace in every valley,
a silvery brook flows down to golden rivers.
Above a chain of untamed mountains, silvan lands,
the god-like flight is wafted,
and already in the distance you can see shining
in its gulfs the ocean.
But the bright divinity inclines its head to the waters
and suddenly the mysterious might of its wing
has come to life again and chases after the departing one
and once more the soul drowns in currents of light.
Day is in front of me, night behind.
At my feet a plain of water, the sky above my head.
Lovely dream! A vain one! Farewell!
To match the wings of the soul soaring above the earth,
we'll not find corporeal ones in a hurry.
But this gust, this urge skywards and into the distance,
is a natural inclination,

all people have it in their breast
and at times it comes to life in us,
when, during spring, above our heads,
the lark's song tinkles from a cloud,
when over a steep, wooded slope
the eagle, spreading its wings, soars,
when over lakes or the empty steppe
the crane hurries home.

5

There was a king, so few they are now,
faithful up to his death.
As he died, his loved one
gave him a goblet.

.....
He valued it greatly
and frequently drained it,
his heart beating strongly in him
the moment he picked it up.

.....
When his turn came
to quit this world,
he divided out his possessions,
but did not give away the cup.

.....
And into the castle above the sea
he summoned his friends
and, taking his farewells of them,
he sat there carousing.

.....
When he drank for the last time
the fiery liquid,
he leaned out over the abyss
and tossed the cup into the waters.

.....
To the bottom of the sea the goblet sank,
it sank and vanished from view,
his heart began to beat
the king had drunk his last drop!

6

Almighty spirit, you have given me everything, everything
I prayed for! Not for nothing
did your face lean radiant to me!
You gave me all of nature to possess
and showed me how to love it. You allowed me
not to be a mere, idly-amazed guest
at her feast, but admitted me
into the very depths of her breast,
as into the heart of a friend! The ranks of earth-born
filed past me and you taught me,
in a thicket, in the open, or on the seas' bosom,
to see brotherhood there and to love it!
When a storm creaks and whistles through conifers,
a giant pine smashes the neighbouring trees with a crack
in a crash of falling boughs, indistinctly a rumble
arises all around and, unsteady, the hillsides groan.
You lead me into a peaceful cavern,
and you present me

to the eyes of my very soul and its world,
its wondrous world, you reveal for me!
Let the all-sweetening moon rise
in its meek brilliance and to me there fly
from craggy mountains, from the humid pine forest,
the silver shades of past ages,
and in the stern consolation of contemplation
they soften me with their mysterious influence!

60. FROM THE FIFTH OF MAY (MANZONI)

Lofty presentiment's
urges and languor,
the soul, thirsting for mastery,
in its seething aspirations,
the coming together of designs
as unfeasible as dream,

.....

all of this he experienced,
happiness, victory, incarceration,
and all the partiality of fate,
and all the bitterness!
Twice he was cast down into the dust,
twice he gained the throne!

.....

He appeared: two centuries
in cruel conflict,
seeing him, suddenly made peace,
as they would before omnipotent destiny.
He commanded them to be silent
and sat between them in judgement!

.....

He disappeared and in exile saw out
his incredible times,
the object of a measureless envy,
of measureless compassion,
the object of frenzied enmity,
of blind devotion!

.....

Just as over the heads of the drowning,
growing into a huge wall of foam,
is the wave which at first played with them,
and the longed for shore
vainly visible to palpitating glances
appears from above,

.....

so memory above his soul,
gathering, lies heavy!
How often this soul desired
to speak out
and, stupefied, onto the sheet already begun,
the hand suddenly fell!

.....

How often before day's end,
a day of joyless torment,
lowering his lightning-flashing eyes,

folding his arms across his breast,
he would stand, letting the past
possess him!

.....

In his mind's eye he saw the campaign tents,
the plains of battle,
the long glint of infantry ranks,
currents of cavalry formations,
an iron world breathing
by one command alone!

.....

Oh, beneath such a burden
his heart lost its energy
and his spirit sagged ... but a powerful
hand came down to him
and, merciful, to heaven
raised him!

61. FROM PHEDRE (RACINE)

We had just left the gates of Trezene.
He sat on his chariot, surrounded
by his bodyguard, as silent as he.
He took the Mycaenas road,
absently giving his horses free rein,
these lively, fiery horses,
so proud in their usual ardour,
today heads down, gloomy, quiet,
seeming to be in accord with him.
Suddenly from the watery depths a cry came,
troubling the air's silence,
and at that moment some fearsome voice
from beneath the earth replied with a groan.
Everyone's blood froze in their chests
and the keen horses' manes stood up.
But then, white above the watery plain,
a wave rose, like a mountain of snow,
growing, getting nearer, smashing into the shore
and throwing up a monstrous beast.
Its head was armed with horns,
its spine covered with yellowish scales.
A terrible bull, a frenzied dragon,
in innumerable coils it came out.
The shore, shaking, groaned from its roaring;
the day, indignant, shone on it.
The earth shifted. The wave which had tossed it out,
as if fear-stricken, lapped back.
Everyone hid, seeking salvation in flight.
Only Hippolytus, true son of a hero,
only Hippolytus, allowing fear no access,
stopped the horses, seized his lance
and, flinging the steel with his accurate arm,
opened a deep gash in the monster.
The beast howled, feeling the pain of the spear.
Raging, it fell at the horses' feet
and, scrabbling at the ground, from its bloody jaws
poured stench and flame around them!

Fear seized the horses. They sped off,
 not heeding the voice, not obeying the reins.
 The charioteer vainly tried to tame them,
 but off they flew, blood from their mouths staining the bridles.
 Some god, it is said, with his trident
 prodded their steaming flanks.
 They flew across rocks, patches of undergrowth.
 The axle creaked and broke. The fearless Hippolytus
 from his smashed, crushed chariot
 fell to earth, enmeshed in the reins.
 Forgive my tears! This mournful scene
 will forever call tears from me!
 I saw, alas, your son
 dragged by the horses he had reared, bloodied,
 crying to them, his shouts scaring them more.
 They ran, they flew with the ripped driver.
 Behind them I sprinted with the guards,
 his fresh blood marking our path,
 blood on the stones, in the prickly thorns
 bloody clots of hair hanging.
 Our maddened cries carried across the land!
 But finally the crazed steeds'
 ardour calmed down. They stopped
 near where your forefathers
 lie at rest in ancient tombs!
 I ran up, I called. With enormous effort
 opening his eyes, he gave me his hand:
 The might of the heavens kills me off in my prime.
 Friend, do not abandon my Aricia!
 When that day comes when my parent,
 dissipating the gloom of fearsome slander,
 is finally convinced of his son's innocence,
 oh, to console a complaining shadow,
 let him alleviate his prisoner's
 lot! Let him return to her.
 The hero died at these words,
 and in my arms which held him
 there remained a corpse, savagely distorted,
 a sign of the horrible punishment of the gods,
 unrecognisable even by a father's eyes!

62. NIGHT THOUGHTS (GOETHE)

I pity you, hapless stars!
 So beautifully, so brightly do you burn,
 willingly lighting the mariner's way,
 unrewarded by God or man!
 You don't know love. You've never known it!
 Unstoppable, the gods of time lead you
 through the sky's limitless night!
 Oh, what a path you have traversed
 since the moment when, in my sweetheart's arms,
 I sweetly turned off from midnight and you!

63. FROM A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT'S DREAM (SHAKESPEARE)

1

Lovers, madmen and poets
are forged from one and the same imagination!
One sees demons which don't even exist in Hell
(the madman, that is), another is equally insane,
the passionate lover, seeing, entranced,
Helen's beauty in a dark-skinned gypsy.
The poet's eye, in bright frenzy,
turning round upon itself, sparkles and slips
from sky to earth, from earth to sky,
and, let his imagination but create forms
for unknown creatures, then the poet's wand
transforms them into people and gives
aerial shades a place and a name!

2

The hungry lion has begun to roar
and the wolf has howled at the moon.
Having got through a day of labour,
the poor ploughman has fallen asleep.

.....

The coals are going out on the fire,
the eagle owl has begun to screech
and to the invalid on his death-bed
has predicted an early shroud.

.....

All cemeteries at this time
from yawning graves
into the moon's damp dusk
send forth their dead!

64.

Just as the ocean curls around earth's shores,
our earthly life's embraced by dreams.
Night comes and brings the element
and night intensifies its roars.

.....

Now, there's its voice, persisting, pleading.
The magic skiff is straining to be free.
Now out it goes, its human cargo leading
into the dark, immeasurable sea.

.....

Heaven's vault's aflame with starry glory.
From every side, as long as we're afloat,
its mystery staring from the deeps,
that fiery chasm engulfs our boat.

65. FROM HERNANI (HUGO)

Forgive me, great Charles! Great, unforgotten,
this voice should not be troubling these walls,
disturbing your immortal dust, oh giant,
with the buzzing of passions living but a moment!
This European world, the creation of your hand,
how great it is, this world! What a possession!

With two chosen leaders above it
and the entire purple-born throng beneath their feet!
All other powers, authorities, possessions
are legacies and accidents of birth,
but God Himself has given the pope and the caesar to the earth
and through them, providence makes chance observations of us.
Thus it reconciles order and freedom!
All of you, in disgrace serving the people,
you, electors, you, cardinals, the diet, the synod,
you're all nothing! The Lord decides, the Lord commands!
Let a thought be born among the people, a thought conceived over the ages,
first it grows in the shade and rustles in hearts,
suddenly it has become flesh, enticing the people!
Princes forge a chain for it and stop its mouth,
but its day has arrived and boldly, majestically
it has stridden into the diet, appeared at the conclave,
and with a sceptre in its hands or a mitre on its head,
has pressed all crowned heads to the ground.
Thus are the pope and caesar all powerful - everything earthly
happens only by and through them. Like a living mystery
heaven appeared on their earth and the entire world,
peoples and monarchs, was given to them as a feast!
Their will organises the world and encloses the edifice,
creates and destroys. This one decides, the other divides.
This one is Justice, the other is Strength - in those two
exists their own supreme law and there is no other for them!
When both leave the altar,
one in purple, the other in the white garb of the tomb,
the world, benumbed, sees this pair in the radiance of their magnificence,
these two aspects of the divinity!
And to be one of them, one! Oh, a disgrace
not to be him! And in the breast to feed this urge!
Oh, how fortunate, resting in his tomb,
was this hero! What a fate God sent him!
What a destiny! And what then? This is his tomb, here.
So this is where it ends, alas, everything there was
of the law-giver, the leader, the governor, the hero,
the titan, his head rising above all times,
like the one who ruled the whole of Europe,
whose title was Caesar, whose name was Charles the Great,
the most famous of famous names even today,
great, as great as the world, and it's all contained in here!
Seek out dominions and weigh the handful of dust
of him who had everything, his power revered as much as God's.
Fill with thunder the whole of earth, build, raise up
your columns to the clouds, ever higher, height upon height,
although your fame has touched the immortal stars,
that's its limit! Oh monarchy, oh power,
oh, what are you? All the same, do I too not seek power?
A mysterious voice promises me: It is yours. Mine.
Oh, if it were but mine! Will the prophecy come to pass,
to stand on the height and enclose creation
on high - alone - between heaven and earth
and see the entire world in echelons below me:
first monarchs, then - at various stages -
the elders of inherited and masterly households,
there are the doges, the dukes, the princes of the church,

there the sacred family of knightly ranks,
there the clergy, the armies, and there, in the misty distance,
at the very bottom, the people, innumerable (INDEC),
the sea's deep abyss tearing at its shore,
the hundred-sounded rumble, cries, lamentations, occasional bitter laughter,
mysterious life, immortal movement,
wherever you cast your glance across the deeps, they're all in movement,
a threatening mirror for the consciences of monarchs,
the opening where the throne perishes and the mausoleum floats to the surface!
Oh, how many enigmas there are for us in your dark confines!
Oh, how many monarchies lie on the bed, like the skeletons
of huge vessels constricting the free depths,
but you breathed on them and the freight sank to the bottom!
And all this world is mine, and I shall fearlessly seize
the rod of authority in this world! Who am I? The progeny of dust!

66. THE SEA HORSE

Ardent horse, sea-horse,
pale-green maned,
gentle, loving-tamed,
raging, wild-playing,
fed by violent storms
in God's open plains!
He taught and trained you
to play, to leap at will.
.....
I love you when you bound
madly, arrogantly strong,
tossing your thick mane,
sweating, foaming,
dashing fast storms against the shore,
gaily neighing, galloping,
drumming cliffs with your hooves,
white-flecked, flying!

67. THE SINGER (GOETHE)

What sounds are they in front of my house,
what voices before my gates?
Let the song ring out before us
in our high tower!
The king spoke, the page runs,
the page returned, the king speaks:
Quickly, admit the old man!
.....
Praise and honour to you, oh knights,
adoration to you, my ladies!
How can one count the stars in the sky?
Who knows their names?
Though my gaze is drawn to this paradise of wonders,
look down. Now is not the time
To idly entertain my eyes!

.....
The grey-haired singer shut his eyes
and gaily struck the strings.
The eyes of the bold were bolder still,
while the ladies bowed bashful heads.
The king was captivated by the playing.
He sent for a golden chain
with which to honour the grey-haired singer!

.....
Don't give me any golden chain.
I am not worthy of such a reward.
Give it to your knights,
fearless in battle.
Give it to your scribes,
adding to their other toils
this golden burden!

.....
I sing at God's will,
like a bird in the sky,
not seeking recompense for my songs,
for the song is reward enough!
I'd ask one boon of you, just one,
and that's a golden goblet
filled with bright wine!

.....
He took the cup and drank it dry
and spoke with heat in his heart:
Let God bless such a household
where this serves only as a meagre gift!
Let him send his favours to you
and let Him comfort you on this earth
just as you have comforted me!

68.

Here, the sky stares inert
at the gaunt earth.
Tired nature, sunk in slumber,
lies, fettered, nightmare-girt.
.....

Here and there, pallid birches,
grey moss, scanty bush,
like dreams tormenting us in fever,
trouble the deathly, peaceful hush.

69. PEACE

The storm has passed.
Thunder-smitten, the tall oak
is prostrate, smouldering still,
boughs trickling blue smoke
through the greenery, where,
for a while now, louder, fuller,
throughout the storm-refreshed copse,

bird-song resounds,
and a rainbow has settled
the end of its arc among
the green summits.

70. TO TWO SISTERS

I saw you both together
and at once saw you in her:
that quiet glance, tender voice,
that charm of early morning
wafting from your head!

.....

As if in a magic mirror
everything was clearly defined again:
the joy, the sadness of past days,
your youth, now wasted,
my love, now dead!

71.

I recall that day.
For me, it was the morning of life's day:
silently, she stood before me,
her breasts rising like waves,
cheeks reddening, like dawn,
getting hotter, glowing, burning!
Then suddenly, like a young sun,
a golden world of love
burst from her breast and
I saw a new world!

72. CICERO

The Roman orator was speaking
as citizens started to fight:
I rose late, and while I was walking
was chased and captured by Rome's night .
So be it! But making your farewells, you saw
in grandeur and with awe,
Rome's bloody star go down.

.....

Blessed is he who visits this life
at its fateful moments of strife:
the all-wise sent him an invitation
to speak with them at their celebrations.
He's the witness of high affairs,
knows their councils, sits on them,
and a living god while there,
has drunk immortality with them.

73. AN AUTUMN EVENING

In the brightness of autumn evenings
there is a touching, mysterious charm:
an ominous glitter, motley trees,
a light, languorous rustle of scarlet leaves,
a hazy, quiet blueness
across the sadly orphaned world
and, presaging gathering storms,
at times a gusty snap of wind.
Loss. Exhaustion. And on it all
there is that gentle smile of fading
which, in a thinking creature, we should call
the divine shame of suffering.

74. LEAVES

Let pines and firs
jut out all winter,
curled up and sleeping
through snows and blizzards.
Their meagre greens,
like a hedgehog's spines,
might never yellow -
they're never fresh.

.....

But we, we're a light tribe,
blossoming, glittering
such a short time,
guests on our branches.
All the fine summer
we're beautiful people,
playing with sunbeams,
bathing in dews.

.....

The birds have stopped singing,
flowers stopped blooming,
sunbeams have paled,
breezes have dropped.
So why hang on? And why go yellow?
Surely it's better
to fly away with them?

.....

Faster, wild winds,
faster, faster!
Snatch us quickly
from boring boughs.
Tear us, hurl us away.
We don't want to wait.
Fly, come fly
and we'll fly with you!

75.

Crossing Livonian fields ...
Baltic emptiness, sand

and the dull emptiness of this colourless land
allowed my soul to yield
to contemplation of its former sad plight,
a dark and bloody state
when its citizens, prostrate,
kissed the spurs of invading knights.
I stared at a deserted water-course.
Along its length were silent spinneys.
I thought, You've had quite a journey,
you peers of the past, you've forced
a path into our lives
from the shores of another time and place!
So many questions!
Such frustration! I strive
for an answer, I try to tease just one.
But nature names no names,
smiling in her ambiguous, mysterious way,
like an adolescent, by chance peeking in on night games
and keeping his secret during the day.

76.

Sand gives softly. Hooves sink.
We ride. It's late. Light starts to fade.
The shadows of the pines along the roadside
have merged into a single shade.
The wood's dark heart grows denser, blacker.
It's such a melancholy place!
Night scowls, a hundred-eyed wild creature.
From every bush it leers and pokes its face!

77. THE WANDERER

Zeus is kind to the poor tramp.
His patronage enables
this exile from the cares of home
to sit as a guest at Heaven's table!
.....
This wonderful creation of their hands,
this world so varied in its every feature,
unwinds before him as he goes,
for him to love, for him to use, to be his teacher.
.....
Through hamlets, fields and towns
the brightening road extending,
he wanders freely the entire earth.
He sees it all, to God his praises sending!

78. MADNESS

Where the earth is seered,
in the sky's misty haze disappears,
in carefree gaiety
lives pitiful insanity.
.....

Beneath rays which burn,
digging into flaming sands,
his glassy gaze is turned
to seek things far above the land.

.....

Suddenly he'll leap, wary as a beast,
pressing his ear against the parched soil,
avidly sure some sound will reward his toil.
With mysterious pleasure his features are creased.

.....

He thinks he hears currents bubbling their mirth
as they course beneath the ground,
and he thinks it's a cradle-song he's found
as they noisily burst from the earth.

79. THE ALPS

Throughout blue nights
glisten mountains' eyes,
eyes of death, eyes of fright,
by icy horror paralysed.
Charmed by some spell
till Dawn's first beams,
in hazy menace they dream,
like all those ancient kings who fell.

.....

But let the East begin to shine
and the fatal charms are broken.
High up and first in line
the eldest brother has awoken.
From the head of the next there rolls
a stream onto the heads of all the others,
till, glistening in crowns of gold,
all the family's resurrected with the brothers!

80. INFECTED AIR

I love God's wrath, this Evil!
Invisible, mysterious, poured through everything:
in the flowers, in the glass-clear stream,
in the rainbow-rays, in the very sky of Rome.
The same high, cloudless sky,
your breast's same sweet breath,
the same warm wind rustling tree-tops,
the same scent of roses.... All of this is death!

.....

Who knows, perhaps nature has her sounds,
aromas, colours, voices
presaging our final hour,
sweetening our final torment,
and as the fates encroach
and call earth's sons from this life,
perhaps their messenger uses them,
weaving a veil to hid his face
and his fearsome approach!

81.

We walk behind our age
as Creusa walked behind Aeneas.
As we go a little way, we weaken,
but if we hurry on, we fall behind.

82. VERNAL WATERS

Snow is still white in the fields
but spring is in the water's voice.
Running, the waters wake the sleepy banks.
They run, they glisten, they rejoice.

.....

Spring is coming, spring is coming!
in every direction they shout.
We're the young spring's runners,
with the news she has sent us out!

.....

Spring is coming, spring is coming!
In a bright, rosy round-dance plays
a frolicking, happy bustle
of May's warm, quiet days.

83. STAY SILENT!

Stay silent, out of sight and hide
your feelings and your dreams inside.
Within your soul's deep centre let
them silently rise, let them set
like stars in the night. Don't be heard.
Admire them, Don't say a word.

.....

How can your heart itself express?
Can others understand or guess
exactly what life means to you?
A thought you've spoken is untrue.
You only cloud the streams you've stirred.
Be fed by them. Don't say a word.

.....

Making living in yourself your goal.
There is a world within your soul
where mystery-magic thoughts abound.
By outer noise they will be drowned.
They'll scatter as day is bestirred.
Just heed their song. Don't say a word!

84.

As a piece of paper
smoulders, catches, burns
on glowing embers,
the flames indistinct

and hidden at first,
licking, eating words and lines,
so life is sadly gnawed away,
vanishing a little at a time,
so am I snuffed out,
a fraction every day -
intolerable monotony!
Oh, my dear Christ,
let me once, just once
range flame-like at will,
not languishing, and not tormented,
bursting into brilliance
before - just going out!

85. TO....

Lips which greet me with a smile,
a young girl's rosy complexion,
your gaze which is bright and which sparkles....
it all entices me to pleasure.

.....

Ah, this gaze in passion's fire
on gossamer wings sends out desire,
and with some magical power
locks hearts in its fabulous tower!

86.

Just as Agamemnon brought this daughter
as an offering to the gods,
asking the indignant heavens
for the breath of fair winds,
so we, over woeful Warsaw,
have struck a fateful blow,
and at this bloody price we'll buy
Russia's integrity and peace.

.....

Away from us, inglorious wreath
woven by a servile hand!
Not for the koran of autocracy
did Russian blood run like a river!
No! We were animated in the fight
not by any love of carnage,
not as trained and bestial janissaries,
and not because, as executioners, we must subdue!

.....

A different thought, a different belief
beat in Russians' hearts:
we needed to maintain the integrity of authority
by the saving storm of example,
to gather under one Russian banner
kindred generations of Slavs,
to lead them in the campaign of enlightenment,
all of one mind, like a host!

.....

This higher consciousness
led our valiant people.
It boldly takes upon itself
the vindication of heaven's ways.
It senses above its head
a star in the invisible heights
and unswervingly follows the star
to its mysterious destination!

.....
Pierced by your brother's arrow,
fulfilling destiny's pronouncement,
you fell, single-tribed eagle,
onto the purifying fire!
Believe the word of the Russian people:
your ashes will be preserved by us in sanctity,
and our general freedom,
like the phoenix, will be reborn in them!

87.

The storm howls more evilly, screaming its spite.
Caress me, my lover, cling to me tight.
Oh darling, I fear the skies' vengeful power.
Don't talk of forbidden love at this hour.
The song of the storm is so sweet as it gusts
and lulls us on our bed of lust.
Oh, remember the sea and the miserable sailors,
gracious lord, shelter all of those wretches.
In the sea's broad ravines let the waves roam at will.
They won't breach our refuge nor shatter this still.
Oh darling, don't say that, such talk is not right.
Don't you know who is out on the ocean this night?!
Lamenting and trembling, her voice fades away
and silent and still in the darkness they lay.
The storm went quiet. The tempest cleared.
The clock on the wall was all they could hear,
and silent and still in the darkness they lay,
and over the pair a strange terror played.
Fearsome and sudden, thunder crashed round
and the building was shaken right down to its founds.
The baby screamed out, despairing and wild,
and the mother leaped straight to the source of the sound,
but the moment she reached the bed of her child
she crashed to the ground in a swoon.
In the lightning flashes which sundered the gloom,
the ghost of her husband was clearly seen
where he sat by the cot at the end of the room.

88. PEACE IN SPRINGTIME (UHLAND)

Oh, do not bury me
in the damp earth.
Cover me, hide me
in the thick grass!

Let breezes breathe
and rustle in the grass,
let a distant pipe play songs,
let bright, quiet clouds
sail above me!

89.

You were the best leaf
on humanity's high tree,
nourished by its purest sap,
grown in the sun's purest rays!

.....

More harmonious than all
you shook with its great soul,
prophetically talking with storms,
happily playing with breezes!

.....

Not a late wind, not late summer rain
tore you from your native branch.
Fairer than many, outliving so many,
you simply fell, like a leaf from a garland.

90.

Two demons served him.
Two forces merged wondrously within him:
in his head, eagles soared,
in his breast, serpents writhed,
a daring eagle-flight
of wide-spanned inspirations;
and in the very riot of audacity
there was a calculating serpent.
But not sanctifying power,
a force of which the mind cannot conceive,
illuminated his soul
nor stepped towards him.
He was of earth, not God's flame.
He proudly sailed, despised the sea,
but on the hidden reef of faith
his fragile boat was smashed.

91. A PROBLEM

After tumbling down the mountain, a stone lies in a valley.
How did it fall away? Right now, no-one knows.
Did it tear from the heights on its own?
Or was it cast down by the will of another?
Aeons have flowed by, yet no-one knows the reason why.

92. A DREAM AT SEA

Our boat was being tossed by the storm and the sea.

I slept as each wave for its whim toyed with me.
 Deep within me two immensities met.
 Helpless, I lay by their playing beset.
 All around me, like cymbals, the rocks clashed strong,
 the waves called each other, the winds sang their song.
 By all this chaos of noise I lay drowned,
 but my dream was borne over the chaos of sound.
 Magically silent, painfully bright,
 it flew lightly above the thundering night.
 Through the rays of my fever its world could be seen:
 the ether shone bright. The world became green.
 There were labyrinth-gardens, pillars and halls,
 assemblies were massed there, in silence stood all;
 I thought all were strangers, but many I knew;
 I saw magic creatures. Mystery-birds flew;
 The heights of creation, a god, I bestrode.
 Far beneath me a motionless universe glowed.
 But I heard from below, like a sorcerer's wail,
 the sea-deeps my wanderings stormed and assailed,
 and into my silence of dreams burst the lash
 of tempests, of howls, of the sea's frightful crash.

93. (BERANGER)

I'm ending of days in a ditch.
 I'm weak and old with no strength to go on!
 He drinks, can't you see? they say about the tramp.
 Just so long as they don't pity me!
 Some, walking off, shrug their shoulders,
 some throw the beggar a copper!
 How a nice journey, friends! Damn you all!
 I can finish my days without you!

I've laboured through, I've coped with the years,
 clearly people don't die of hunger.
 Perhaps, I thought, on a bed
 they will at least let me die,
 but their hospitals and gaols
 are all full! You can't even force your way in!
 You were nourished on the open road.
 Where you lived and grew (INDEC), old man, there you will die.

.....
 I approached master craftsmen to start with,
 wanting a trade in order to eat.
 We've barely work for ourselves!
 Pick up your bag. Get out and beg.
 I dragged myself over to you, rich men,
 gnawing at bones from your table,
 sharing the scraps with your curs,
 but I, poor man, wish you no ill.

.....
 I could have gone stealing, I, a wretched tramp,
 but shame always fettered my hand.
 Only now and then on the open road
 did I pilfer wild fruits from the trees.
 Because among you I have been a beggar,

you made me an orphan for life.
More than once I sat in the lock-up,
but who sold you the sunlight?

.....

What are you and your fame to me,
your commerce, your liberties, your victories?
You are all wrong in my eyes.
The beggar has no native land!
Once, the armed intruder came
and captured our splendid town,
and I, like an idiot cried in vexation,
cursing the foe who fed me!

.....

Why did you not crush me
like some venomous reptile?
Or why did you not teach me -
- alas! - to be a useful bee?
From your embraces, mortal folk,
I was excluded from my earliest years.
I'd have blessed you, brethren, I would.
Instead, as he dies, the tramp curses you!

94. THE SKALD'S HARP

Skald-harp, long ago your poet-master
left you to oblivion in this dusty room,
but as soon as the moon, enchanting the gloom,
splashes a ray in your corner,
then your strings perform a magic tune,
like troubled souls in delirious swoon.
When it breathes on you, what life swirls
in your heart as you recall past days?
Memories of nights when voluptuous girls
told old stories, sang sweet lays,
or when, in these gardens still fair and green,
seeking trysts, their light feet tripped unseen?

95.

I like the service of the Lutherans.
Their worship is severe, simple yet imposing.
I understand the lofty lessons
in these bare walls, in this empty temple.

.....

Can't you see? Preparing to leave,
faith presents itself to us for the final time:
it's barely crossed its threshold,
yet already its house stands bare and empty.

.....

It's barely crossed its threshold,
the door not closed behind it,
but here its hour has struck. Pray to God.
It's the last time you will pray.

96. (HEINE)

With which of the two has fate decreed
that I should fall in love?

Daughter and mother are fair indeed,
like each other, each uniquely charming.

.....

How her untried, youthful members
sweetly agitate my mind!
Yet the charm of those brilliant glances
is omnipotent over my soul.

.....

Flapping my ears in contemplation,
I stand just as Buridan's friend did,
between two hay ricks, staring,
wondering which of the two would be the sweeter?

97.

From land to land, from town to town
like a whirlwind, Fate sweeps people on.
It may suit you or it may not,
why should it care? - Move on, move on!

.....

A well-known sound is blown:
the wind sings love's final farewell.
So many tears are left behind.
Ahead, there's mist. Ahead is the unknown!

.....

Oh, wait, look back!
Where are you running? Why run at all?
Love's dropped behind
What's better in the world than that?

.....

Love's still falling back,
in tears and in despair.
Have pity on your pain,
your bliss you should spare!

.....

Bring to mind the bliss
of so many, many days.
All that's dear to your soul
you're abandoning along the way!

.....

It's not the time to summon shades:
that time is now dead dark.
The shadows of departed souls
are far more dread, the dearer they were.

.....

From land to land, from town to town,
a mighty whirlwind sweeping people on.
It may suit you or it may not,
why should it ask? - Move on, move on!

98.

I remember a golden time.

I remember a country my heart loved well.
Day became dusk. We were together.
Below us in shadow the Danube sang.
Where, white upon a hill,
a ruined castle stared into the distance,
you stood, young elfin creature,
leaning on the mossy granite.
Your young leg touched
the age-old keep's remains
while the sun dallied in its farewells
to the castle, the hill and to you.
A quiet, passing breeze
playing with your dress,
and from wild apples, flower after flower
strewn lightly around your shoulders...
Without a care, you stared into the distance,
the skyline dimmed in hazy beams.
The day burned out; the song called louder
from the river in its darkening banks.
In carefree joy you spent the happy day.
Sweetly the shade of swiftly-flowing life
passed over us and flew away.

99.

My soul, you're an Elysium of shades,
silent shades, beautiful shades which shine
and play in this stormy age no role,
having no part in joy, in grief,
in anything of their design.

.....

Elysium of shades, yes, you my soul!
Can you and life have my dealings,
you, ghosts of all my best, now long-past days,
estranged by poles
from men who have no feelings?

100.

How sweetly sleep lies on the green garden
taken by night's blue in blissful swoon,
and through the apple-blossom-whitened boughs
how sweetly filter rays from the golden moon!
As on the first day of creation, with mystery
the starry hosts burn in the shoreless sky,
and there are heard the shouts of distant music;
still louder's the voice of the brook nearby.
Across earth's day there's been unfurled a curtain
All movement's been exhausted, energy's consumed.
Above the sleeping town, as if in forest-summits,
a wondrous nightly humming is resumed.
Where is it from, this noise beyond our comprehension?
Has sleep let loose a spirit-world of thoughts,

the thoughts of men (we hear them yet see nothing)
to crowd with them the chaos night has brought?

101.

No, Mother-Earth, my tenderness for you
I'm powerless not to display!
I do not thirst for pale delights of fleshless spirits.
Your loyal son I'll stay.

Compared to you what are the joys of heaven,
or of spring, when love is in full stream,
or the blissful world of May in flower,
or the golden sun, or the glow of dreams?

.....

I'd rather spend all day in deep inaction,
spring's warm air drinking deep and true.
At times, across the distant, pure skies
sail cloud-wisps which my eyes would eagerly pursue.
I'd wander aimless, doing nothing,
and stumble inadvertently
upon a lilac's fresh aroma,
or on a shining reverie.

102.

Silent air enwrapping
me, storm-threatening,
crickets louder singing,
roses' aromas sharper rising

.....

From behind a white, hazy cloud
thunder rattles round the land.
Lightning scampers round the sky,
sewing for its waist a band.

.....

Life-surplus overflowing,
nectar pouring
through the air, scorching,
melting through my veins, burning ...

.....

Girl, what things excite
the gauze across your breasts,
darkening and troubling
your eyes' moist light?

.....

Why do you turn so pale?
What chases your maidenly blush?
What presses onto your bosom?
Why do your lips start to flush?

.....

Through silken lashes
tears form -
are they early raindrops
of the coming storm?

103.

Willow, why do you lower
your head to the river,

letting, like hungry mouths,
your leaves a-quiver
try to catch the fleeing stream?

.....

All the longing, all the shuddering
of every leaf above the stream!
Still the river runs and glistens,
basking in the sun and splashing,
flowing by and mocking you.

104.

Foul night, misty night ...
Is that a skylark's voice,
is that you, morning's lovely guest,
at this late, dead hour,
pliant, playful, bright with song
at this dead, late hour?
Like the fearful laughter of the insane,
it wrenched my soul. It caused me pain.

105.

Into the grave the coffin's lowered.
All around, the mourners press.
They jostle, pushing, breathing heavy.
Corruption presses on my breast.
The grave is still uncovered.
The pastor stands just where the coffin lay.
He is dignified and learned.
His funeral sermon's under way.
Man's fragility he preaches,
the Fall, the blood which Jesus shed.
We hear this clever, worthy discourse.
In different ways our thoughts are led.

.....

Incorruptible, pure,
boundless over all the earth - the sky!
And birds! Their voices bursting loud,
wheeling round the airy world,
they scatter, sing and fly!

106.

The east whitened.
We were scarcely moving.
The canvas gaily flapped against the prow.
As if the sky had been upturned,
the sea beneath us trembled.

.....

Dawn reddened
and she had started praying.
She'd worn a veil.
She took it from her brow.
She breathed a prayer, and when she turned
the sky within her eyes exulted.

.....
Dawn flamed.
Her head was slowly sinking.
Her neck gleamed whitely, cowed,
and down her youthful cheeks were burned
the traces of her fiery tears.

107.

Blue-grey mingling.
Colour darkening.
Silence possesses sound.
Life and movement have drowned
in the rippling unrealness of dusk,
in a distant hum.
Unseen in the night, a moth sings.
Longing seeks words. Anguish comes.
Everything is me.
I am everything.

.....
Quiet twilight, sleeping twilight,
pour into my being.
Silent, aromatic languor,
take the world, flowing,
bring peace, bring still.
Oblivion, haze.
Sensation, take me, overfill
my soul,
give me void.
In the world's sleep
pour me, fold me,
let me be destroyed!

108.

The kite lifts from the field.
It heads towards the sky.
Sharper it wheels,
higher weaving flight.
It strikes the sky-slope,
dwindles, leaves my sight.
Nature, you give such gifts!
Strong wings!
They pound with life,
with force, unbridled power they lift!
While on the dusty earth and in my sweat stand I -
Earth-King!
This king would leave his earth.
This king would like to try!

109.

What a wild ravine!
A spring runs at me,
hurrying down to a house-warming.
I stay up here where the pine stands.

Now I'm higher still,
sitting, joyful, quiet.
Run to your valley.
Go on, stream,
see what it's like among people!

110.

The whole world starts as sunlight streams
to wake it, like a bird which shakes its feathers.
Fine, fine! Beneficial dreams
have passed my by while visiting the others.
Despite the morning freshness
wafting through my tousled hair,
I feel a heavy weight upon me:
yesterday's dust, yesterday's glare!
It's all so piercing and savage
and I detest in every way
the shouts, the talk, the tumult, all the movement
of the youthful, fiery day!
Red rays falling seer my eyes.
Night, night where are your covers,
your dusky silence, dews, your cool moonrise?
Generations' ancient remnants,
you who have outlived your age,
how valid, yet without foundation,
your grievances which fill a lengthy page!
How sad to be a dusky shadow
whose limbs and bones are tired and frail,
to have to meet the sun and movement,
behind new tribes to trail.

111.

Far into the shining distance,
where the fleeing mountains go,
famous river, river Danube,
eternally your waters flow.
.....
There of old, as goes the saying,
during clear nights of blue,
fairies weaved a round-dance, swaying
under waters, on them too.
.....
Waves would sing, the moon would listen.
High on overhanging hills
knightly castles stared down at them,
watching them with fear-sweet thrills.
.....
With an unterrestrial glimmer,
captive, in a prison spurned,
winks exchanging with the dancers,
lights on ancient towers burned.
.....
All the stars would hearken to them,
wave of them succeeding wave.

Quietly, one to the other
words of conversation gave.

.....
Fastened in ancestral armour,
on the wall the warrior-guard,
as if in sleep, in strange enchantment,
to the tumult listened hard.

.....
Should he almost fall a-slumbering,
clearer the din would roll.
With a prayer he'd quick awaken
and continue his patrol.

.....
Everything has gone. The years have seized it.
Danube, fate has not missed you:
now your lot's to see the steamers
chugging up your waters blue.

112.

Across vine-covered hillsides
go sailing golden clouds.
Below, its waters swelling greenly,
the river darkens, calling loud.
My gaze climbs slowly from the valley
and bit by bit the peaks are found.
Upon the very summit
there is a temple, bright and round.

.....
Into that unearthly dwelling
mortal foot will never go.
There is such light there.
Desertedly so pure, air flows
to silence sounds which reach the heights.
There's only nature-life up there,
and something wafted, lightly festive,
that's like a Sunday's silent air.

113.

Why do you howl, night wind?
Why do you complain insanely?
Your voice is strange. What does it mean?
First muffled, pitiful, then loud?
My heart understands your tongue,
your tale of madness it can't,
and at times you uproot and plough up
frenzied noises in your words!

.....
Don't sing these songs,
these fearsome songs
of ancient Chaos, kindred Chaos!
How avidly the inner soul of night
hears the beloved tale!
It wants to burst from the breast,
it wants to merge with the boundless.

Oh, do not wake the sleeping storms -
Chaos writhes beneath them!

114.

The stream has frozen and dulled,
hiding beneath the hard ice.
Colour has faded. Sound has died.
Ice has fettered everything.
Only the stream's immortal life
does not submit to winter's omnipotent will:
the water flows on and as it babbles
it troubles the deadly still.

.....

So in the orphaned breast,
murdered by the winter of existence,
happy youth no longer flows,
and the stream no longer sports,
although beneath the icy bark
there is still life, there's still a murmur,
and at times there can be heard
the stream's mysterious whisper.

115.

I sit deep in thought and alone,
gazing at dying coals
by tears blurred.
Sadly thinking of past days,
I look for ways
to speak my gloom.
I find no words.

.....

The past - well, has there been a past?
What's now - will that forever last?
It will go by.
It will go by as everything will pass.
Drowning in time's dark morass,
each year will fly.

.....

Year after year, age on age!
Why does man presume to rage?
Such chaff is man!
He'll wither very quickly too.
Each summer, blossom, chaff anew
is nature's plan.

.....

All that we knew once more we'll know.
Once again will roses grow.
Thorns will too.
But you, my flower, pale, forlorn,
in summer you won't be reborn.
Life's not for you.

.....

The hand that plucked you was my own.
The bliss, the grief I felt is known

only on high.
Stay, then, upon my breast until
all breath of love in it is stilled,
the final sigh.

116.

Earth's face is still a melancholy thing,
although the air is breathing spring,
and in a field a dead stalk shivers
while foliage on the pine-trees quivers.
As Nature's waiting to revive,
already through her thinning dreams
she senses that spring is alive
and, though unknowingly, she beams.

.....

You slept too, my soul -
What is it now exciting you,
caressing and kissing your sleep
and dressing your dreams in gold?
Snow-blocks, melting, glisten,
skies gleam blue, blood is playing.
Is this spring's tender, gentle bliss?
Can this be female love I'm sensing?

117. Winter's spite is vain

for its time has come at last.
Knocking at the panes,
spring has cast
it out and everything's in turmoil,
bustling Winter out,
and skylarks in the blueness
have taken up the shout.
Winter is still fussing
and grumbling at the spring.
The latter laughs right in her face,
her noise is louder still.
The evil sorceress is wild.
She grabs a pile of snow.
She runs away and starts to throw
it at the pretty child.
That hardly causes Spring much grief:
she washes in the snow,
and just to spite her enemy,
her cheeks begin to glow.

118.

Brilliant snow shone in the valley,
has melted, has gone.
Spring crops gleam in the valley.
They will fade, they will go.
Which century now stands before me
on snow-summits, sparkling white?
Now the morning light is sowing

red, fresh roses on their heights.

119. THE FOUNTAIN

Look, a living cloud,
the radiant fountain throws
its flaming spray, scattering
moist mist towards the sun,
tossing rays up to the sky,
touching forbidden heights
and once again, a fire-coloured dust,
is sentenced to fall back to earth.

.....

Water-course of human thought,
inexhaustible water-course!
What incomprehensible law
tosses and urges you up there?
How greedily you reach out to the sky!
But an invisible, fateful hand
diffracts and pulls your stubborn stream
in showers of spray back down to the land!

120.

My soul would like to be a star,
but not when these bright things in midnight skies,
like living eyes,
shine, stare upon, gaze
at our sleepy earth-world from afar.
No, but during daytime when,
as if they're hidden
in a searing sunbeam-haze,
in pure, unseen expanses,
like deities,
to burn more brightly they are bidden.

121.

Nature is not what you think it is:
it's not a mould, not a soulless face.
It has a soul. It has freedom.
It has love. It has a tongue.

.....

You see a leaf and bloom on a tree:
did some gardener glue them on?
Or in a kindred womb did the fruit ripen
by the play of outer, alien forces?

.....

They don't see and they are deaf,
living in this world as if they were blind.
Suns don't breathe for them.
The ocean's waves possess no life.

.....

Rays have never come down into their soul.
Spring has never blossomed in their breast.
Forests don't talk in their presence

and starry nights are dumb for them.

.....
In unearthly tongues,
agitating rivers and woods,
they've never held discourse
with a friendly storm!

.....
The fault's not theirs.
Can a deaf-mute understand an organ's life?
Alas for them, they'd be unmoved
by the voice of their own mother!

122.

There's not a spark of feeling in your eyes.
When you speak, your words are lies
and there's no soul in you.
Stand fast, my heart, right to the end:
godless, creation has to fend,
so praying's pointless too.

123.

I love your eyes, dear,
their fiery-playful games,
their sudden upward glances
slowly looking all around
like lightning-flames.

.....
There's a more potent spell:
eyes lower.
A mouth hungers.
Lids almost close.
Sullen arousal glows.

124.

Last night in enchanted dreams,
the moon's last ray
languidly lit your lashes,
while in late sleep you lay.
Silence went quiet around you,
shadows frowned darker,
the even movements of your breast
flowed louder through the air.
Quiet-streaming, quiet-wafting,
as if a breeze had borne it in,
dimly lilac, hazily light
through your bedroom came a fluttering,
an invisible running
across rugs which were glimmering,
clutching the edge of the blankets
and the sides of the bed, crawling,
unfolding like a ribbon
onto your bed like a writhing snake,
teasing beneath your bed curtain

until with a life-shining quiver
it felt your young breasts,
with a loud, rosy cry
it opened your lashes,
felt their silk caressed

125. JANUARY 29TH., 1837

Who fired the shot?
Who stilled the life which quivered
in the poet's heart?
In whose hands was the fragile phial shivered?
Innocent or deserving blame,
in the eyes of earthly justice
and branded forever by heaven,
Regicide will be his name.
Into a dark, timeless deep
you were suddenly swept from existence.
Peace to you, poet!
I wish you bright peace in your sleep.
In spite of vain discourse,
your lot has been divine and great.
You were the god's mouthpiece,
but you lived.
In your veins, warm blood coursed!
This noble blood has silenced jeers
staining honour's name.
Now in the sacred shade you rest,
beneath the banner of our people's tears.
Let Him pass judgement!
He can hear the flow of blood spilled.
You will be first love in a youthful breast:
in Russia's heart eternally dear!

126. DECEMBER 1ST., 1837

So, here's where we're fated
to say our final farewell,
farewell to everything by which we lived,
which killed your life, reducing it to ashes
in your tormented breast!
.....
Farewell.
After many, many years
you'll recall this land with a shudder,
this coast, these hot noons,
where eternal brightness, long blossoming reign,
where, with the breath of late, pale roses,
December's air is warmed.

127. THE ITALIAN VILLA

Bidding farewell to the days,
leaving cares to sleep beneath the cypresses,
blissfully joining the blessed dead,
it slumbered in a blessed haze.

Now, when many years have passed,
 guarded by magic sleep
 in its flowery keep,
 it submits to heaven's desires.
 Heaven's care is so loving!
Warm southern winters, many a summer
 have wafted here in semi-slumber,
 their wings not even brushing ...
 Then we came in ...
 stepped into the trance.
 So dark, so peaceful for so long!
The fountain sang a still and shapely song.
Through a window a cypress cast us a glance.
 Suddenly - turmoil:
 a spasm quivered through the branches.
 The fountain fell silent,
 yet from it some wondrous sound,
 muffled, as if in sleep, shivered.
 What was it, love?
 Had something made that wicked life
which coursed through our veins, turbulently hot,
 step over a forbidden threshold?

128.

Is it so long, blessed South
 since you and I stood face to face
 and, like a god unmasked,
 you revealed yourself to me, a new arrival,
opening your ways to this visitor from the North?
 It's a long time - though without rapture,
 but with good reason moved by new feelings -
 since I have listened intently to the song
 of the great Mediterranean waves!
 And their song, as in times gone by,
 was full of harmony
just as when, from a kindred bosom,
 the bright cypress rose in beauty.
 They have not changed today.
 As before, they glisten noisily
 and across their azure plain
 sacred spectres glide.
 But I have had to say farewell,
 called to the North once more.
Across me once again there falls
 its endless leaden sky.
 there, at the world's frontier,
 in the golden, bright South,
 I see you again at a distance.
 You glisten, fairer still,
 brighter, fresher.
 More audible is your voice
 reaching out to my soul!

129.

What gentle, tender joy, what enamoured pangs
are in your eyes, your passionate gaze alighting on him!
Empty of thoughts, mute ... mute as if stricken by heavenly fire!
Suddenly, over-filled with sensation, from your heart being full,
shuddering, crying, you threw yourself down ...
But soon good sleep, like a child's, free of cares,
visited the silk of your lashes,
and your head lowered onto his arms,
and more tenderly than a mother, he cared, he petted you ...
Your weeping died on your lips ... your breathing was even,
and your sleep was quiet and sweet.
And now... Ah, if you could have dreamed
what the future held for us both,
as if stung, you'd have woken with a scream
or passed into a different dream.

130.

Tired by travel, we made
a stop and rested.
Our brows felt the same shade.
Our eyes lifted to the distant skyline.
.....
Time climbs its slope, inflexibly.
It pulls apart what it once tethered.
Some power whips man on, invisibly.
Sad, alone, through endless space he falls.
Now, friend, have you ever sought
to find again that life we spent together?
What things befall
a look, a tone of voice, debris of thoughts?
That which exists no longer - did we dream it all?

131.

Watch the west flaming up
in evening's dull glow,
the east darkly clothing itself
in a cold, blue-grey comb!
Are they enemies?
Or is the sun one for both?
With its immovable wholeness
dividing, does it unite them?

132. SPRING

No matter how oppressive is the hand of fate,
is human deceit,
no matter how deeply they furrow our brows,
wound our hearts,
no matter how severe are the trials
to which we daily must succumb,
what can resist the breath of
and that first encounter with spring!

.....
Spring does not know us,

us, our grief, our malice ...
Her gaze shines with immortality.
There's not a wrinkle on her brow.
She obeys her own laws.
At the appropriate time she flies down,
bright, blissfully indifferent,
as befits a goddess.

.....
She scatters blossoms on the earth.
She is fresh, like the first spring.
Was there another before?
She doesn't need to know.
The sky is cloud-covered.
These clouds are her own, leaving not a trace
of the extinct life of former springs.

.....
Roses do not sigh about the past,
nor do nightingales sing it.
Dawn does not shed tears
of fragrance for the past,
and terror of the ineluctable end
does not flow from trees and branches.
Their life, like the boundless ocean,
is entirely poured into the present.

.....
All the game, the sacrifice of individual life!
Come, throw off the deceit of feelings
and throw yourself lustily, omnipotently
into this life-creating ocean!
Come on, in its ethereal stream
wash your suffering breast
and in this divinely all-peaceful life
for just one moment be a guest!

133. DAY AND NIGHT

On to the secret world of spirits,
across this nameless chasm,
a cloth of gold has been draped
by the high will of the gods.
This glittering cover is day,
day, which enlivens the earth-born,
heals the suffering soul,
friend of gods and man!

.....
Day will fade. Night has come.
It's here, and from the fated world
it rips the cover of plenty
and tosses it aside,
revealing the abyss
with all its mists and fearsome sights.
No wall divides us from them,
which is why we're afraid of the night!

Don't believe the poet, girl!
Don't ever make the dread mistake
of calling him your own,
and, more than flames, and more than anger from above,
be sure you fear the poet's love!

.....
Don't think you'll win the poet's heart
with your little-girlish soul.
The flames of lust you won't conceal
behind a virgin's delicate veil.

.....
Omnipotent and elemental,
the poet hides an inner weakness:
he may not want to harm you, girl,
but his crown will scorch your maiden's curls!

.....
The rabble, never thinking,
may praise or revile him, but they will soon see
that he does not sting the heart like a snake,
he sucks it like a bee.

.....
The poet's hand is pure:
your sanctuary will be respected,
but he might choke the life from you by chance,
beyond the clouds you might well be abducted!

135.

With such a lovely, sympathetic greeting
from an unattainable height
I beg you not to confuse the poet,
not to test his dream!

.....
He spends his life forgotten in the crowd.
At times their passions find him.
I know the poet's superstitious,
but he rarely serves the powerful.

.....
Before all earthly idols
he walks and bows his head,
or else he stands before them,
confused and timorous, yet proud,

.....
and should a living word
fall suddenly from their lips,

should he, through earthly grandeur,
see all the charms of a female flash,

.....
and fully, humanly aware
of their omnipotent beauty,

should wondrously refined features
shine on him like a sudden dawn,

.....
ah, how his heart takes fire!
how he exults, how charming he becomes!

He may be useless at serving,
but he knows how to revere!

136. TO HANKA

Must we stay apart forever?
Isn't it time that we woke up,
shaking hands
with relatives and friends?

.....

We've been blind for centuries
and, like wretched blind men,
have wandered directionless,
lost, aimlessly.

.....

When by chance
we bumped into each other,
more than once, bloody rivers flowed
and swords tore kindred breasts.

.....

The sea of this mad enmity
bore fruit a hundredfold:
more than once a tribe has perished,
or ended up in exile.

.....

Non-believers, foreign hate
divided us, scattered us:
the Germans stole the homes of some,
the Turks preferred to violate.

.....

Now in this dark night,
here on the heights of Prague,
the valiant warrior's modest hand
has lit a beacon in the gloom.

.....

Oh, what rays
have lit up all parts!
Clearly now we see the face
of this entire Slavonic land!

.....

Mountains, steppes and coasts
are illuminated by this miraculous day,
from the Neva to Montenegro,
from the Carpathians to the Urals.

.....

Dawn breaks over Warsaw,
Kiev has opened its eyes.
Vysehrad has begun to speak
with golden-domed Moscow!

.....

The dialects of our brothers
once again make sense.
Now that they're awake, the grandsons see
what they grandparents only dreamed of!

137. THE BANNER AND THE WORD

Into a bloody storm, through the flames of war,
announcing salvation, the Russian Banner
had led you to immortal victory.
In memory of this sacred union, it's not surprising that
behind the Russian Banner the Russian Word
has come to you in kinship.

138. FROM A RUSSIAN, HAVING READ EXTRACTS FROM MISTER

MICKIEWICZ'S LECTURES.
May the Heavenly King bless
your happy enterprise,
son of undoubted calling,
son of reconciling love.

.....
Not in vain have you boldly cast aside
the tatters from your shoulders.
God has conquered, your eyes are open.
You were a poet, now you are a prophet.

.....
We sense the approach of Light:
your inspired Word,
like a herald of the New Testament,
has been heard throughout the Slavonic World.

.....
We sense the Light, the Time is near,
the final bulwark has crumbled.
Rise up, scattered race,
unite, merge into one People.

.....
Leap up, not as Poland, not as Russia,
rise up, you Slavonic Family!
Throwing off your sleep, be the first
to utter the words: 'Here I am!'

.....
You, supernaturally able
to heal all enmity in yourself,
on your enlightened soul
let God's Grace repose!

139.

Unreal man's so simple to efface,
such a trifle when he's present,
such a nothing when he's absent.
A single point is all his life can span.
His absence is the whole of space!

140.

I stood by the Neva, my gaze
fixed on the giant of St. Isaac's.
Its golden cupola was glinting
through a murk of icy haze.

.....

Timid clouds sailed
onto winter's night sky.
Frozen in a deathly still
beneath the ice, the current paled.

.....

Sad, silent memories came
of lands whose sun burns.
At this very moment,
Genoa's luxuriant gulf's aflame.

.....

Wizard of northern lands,
am I caught by your enchantment?
Am I really held in fetters
against you by your granite hand?

.....

If only some spirit passing by,
wafted through the misty evening,
could swiftly carry me from here
back to my sultry, southern skies!

141. COLUMBUS

A crown for you, Columbus!
Boldly mapping the outlines of Earth
and once for all fulfilling
Destiny's unfinished business,
you rent the veil with your godlike hand
and into God's light, from the limitless murk,
you pulled a new world behind you,
an unknown world, an unexpected one.

.....

Thus are linked and united forever
in a union of blood
that reasoning genius of man
and nature's creative power.
Let him but utter a secret word
and nature, with a whole new world,
is forever ready to respond
to his kindred voice!

142. A REVERIE

What gift can I make at the end of the year?
Winter's wind has killed the turf,
flowers die and leaves have faded.
At this dead time, no living things stir.

.....

Many a sweet and dear leaf was kept
in your herbarium. Your loving fingers
wake in fragrant pages
a History of a love which slept,

.....

a History of youthful, living recollections,
a History which will never know oblivion,
and on whose embers you blew for just a moment,

glowing again in your faithful collection.

.....

You suddenly found two flowers
while leafing through dried remains,
and by some secret magic
in my hands they regained their colours.

.....

Two flowers, both of them fair,
living red, rare of scent,
a shining rose, a glistening carnation.
Perfume and flame bathed the pair.

.....

And you'd like to see
some meaning in this strange enigma.
Need I explain it, my dear?
You insist? Very well, I agree.

.....

When a flower starts to wane,
sadly losing colour, withering,
and you bring it near a fire
you will see it bloom again.

.....

So it happens that when we face
the fatal day, dreams and designs act thus:
when memories' pallor dulls our hearts,
they bloom again in Death's embrace.

143. THE SEA AND THE CLIFF

Raging, seething,
lashing, whistling, roaring,
leaping for the skies,
the unassailable skies ...
Is it hell, some hellish force
beneath the boiling cauldron
churning up the deeps,
some hellish fire
turning the sea-world upside down?

.....

Frenzied wave-onslaught
Nothing stops it, nothing can ...
Roars, whistles, screams, howls ...
Smashing cliffs along the coast ...
Peaceful, haughty,
unmoved by the clowning sea,
motionless, changeless,
born at creation, you stand, our titan!

.....

Battle-maddened,
leaping into fateful struggle
waves come howling back
to beat against your granite face...
The changeless stone
dashes aside the noisy onslaught.
Scattered waters fall apart.
Impotent gusts fall grumbling away.

.....

Stand, mighty cliff!
Just wait awhile.
The thundering waves will tire
of warring with your foot.
Exhausted by its spiteful game
the sea will be subdued.
Forget this howling affray.
Beneath the foot of the titan,
the waves will slink away.

144.

A heavy sky which night has prematurely assailed...
A monstrous river-floe, ice-dulled...
Powder-snow is flailed
around granite quays, threaded, pearled.
The sea's closed in. The living are hurled
into retreat, the living, troubled world.
In the dim dusk-glow lulled,
the pole attracts: its faithful city's pulled.

145.

Longing, desires still ravage
my soul which strives to reach you.
In recollection's twilight
I try to catch your image.
I can't forget your face.
It is a lovely constellation,
timeless, in every place,
unreachable, not knowing fluctuation.

146.

By which can human wisdom more surely be enhanced:
German unity's Babylonian tower,
or the sly republican structure
of the outrages witnessed in France.

147.

A cloud bank, bright and high
covers earth with fleeing shades.
That's our life , you sighed,
not the cloud lit up by rays,
but that shadow running away.

148. TO RUSSIAN WOMAN

Far from the sun and nature,
far from light and art,
far from life and love
your youth flashes by.
Living feelings deadened,

dissipated dreams ...
Your life flows by invisibly
in this deserted, nameless place
on this unnoticed earth,
as a misty cloud just disappears
in the dull and hazy sky
of endless autumn's murk ...

149. A RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHY

Moscow and Peter's town, the city of Constantine,
these are the cherished capitals of the Russian monarchy.
But where is their limit? And where are their frontiers
to the north, the east, the south and the setting sun?
The Fates will reveal them to future generations.

.....

Seven internal seas and seven great rivers
from the Nile to the Neva, from the Elbe to China,
from the Volga to the Euphrates, the Ganges to the Danube.

This is the Russian empire and it will never pass away,
just as the Spirit foretold and Daniel prophesied.

150.

Holy night has climbed across the sky,
 joyful, dear day,
 a golden coverlet, is folded back,
 that cover cast across the chasm.
Like a vision, the outer world has faded.
Like an orphan, man stands impotent and naked,
 facing the dark abyss.
Abandoned to himself, his intellect is obsolete,
 his thought is homeless.
In a great ravine he's immersed,
 in his soul,
and from outside there's no support,
 no limit ...
Like a long-gone dream,
that which was life-bright appears,
 and in the alien,
 in the unresolved,
 in the nocturnal,
his birthright looms clear.

151.

Timidly, unwillingly
sun looks at fields.
Thunder rumbles in a cloud ...
Earth frowns.

.....

Gusts of warm wind ...
Distant growls, spots of rain ...
Greening meadows
greener under threat of storm.

.....
Splitting a cloud -
a blue lightning-streak ...
White, flying flame
hems its edge.

.....
More raindrops...
Dust eddied up from fields.
Thunder claps
are bolder, angrier.

.....
Once more peeks the sun
askance at fields...
Drowning in brilliance -
the crumpled land.

152.

So once again we meet,
unlovely relative,
where I first thought, first felt.
Now, misty-eyed
in the light of fading day,
my childhood looks at me.

.....
Ah, feeble, poor, unclear spectre
of forgotten, enigmatic happiness!
Faithless, detached,
I gaze at you, fleeting guest.
You've become so alien to my gaze,
like my little brother who died at birth.

.....
No, it wasn't here, my deserted land,
my soul was never at home here.
Not here did I celebrate the flowering
of wonderful youth's great feast.
Oh, not in this earth did I bury
everything by which I lived, everything I held so dear!

153.

Quiet evening, late in summer,
as the stars glow in the heavens,
as beneath their dusky glimmer
slumbering cornfields ripen...
in their silent, soothing radiance,
in the stillness of the night,
undulating, golden wavelets
in the moonlight splashed with white...

154.

When clinging, murderous cares
sicken us, when, like a pile of stones,
life lies on us, it happens sometimes, God knows how,
that something joyfully sudden warms our bones.

The past embraces, fans around us.
That fearsome burden briefly rises from us.

.....
So sometimes, in the fall,
when fields are empty, copses bare,
skies are pale and duller are the dales,
a warm, moist breeze can blow,
and before it a dead leaf rolls.
It's just as if spring had poured over our souls.

155.

Tears of people, tears of people,
morning and evening you fall,
pouring invisibly, poured in obscurity,
never an end to you, flowing so constantly,
flowing as rain in its torrents careers
deep in the autumn, when night covers all.

156. TO THE MOST HONOURABLE FILIPP FILIPPOVICH VIGEL ON HIS

NAME DAY

As a token of my love, accept this picture,
understanding it, of course, and the value which we place
on you, though don't forget, if you'll forgive my saying,
we like you a lot, though it's not for your face.

157.

Across an azure plain of water,
chugging on its trusty way,
a fire-breathing, stormy-tempered
sea-snake bore us all away.

.....
From the sky the stars shone down,
sparkling was the water's swell.
Drops of sea-dust in a blizzard
swirled and soared and round us fell.

.....
On the deck we sat together,
many overcome by sleep.
Wheels were singing ever louder,
stirring up the noisy deep.

.....
Now our happy group fell silent,
women's chatter, women's noise,
and, supported by fair elbows,
pleasant thoughts and dreams were poised.

.....
On the river dreams are drifting,
under the magic moon they play.
On the quiet-breathing waters
to a lullaby they sway!

158. DAYBREAK

Not for the first time is the cock crowing.
It's crowing animatedly, briskly and boldly.
In the sky the moon has gown paler.
The Bosphorous waters have begun to glow red.
The bells are still silent,
but dawn is aglow in the east.
Endless night has passed by.
Soon there will come the bright day.

.....
Russia, arise! Your time is at hand!
Arise to serve Christ!
Crossing yourself, has the time not arrived
to strike the bell in the city of Tsargrad?

.....
Ring out your good news.
May it resound throughout the East!
It's calling and awaking you.
Be valiant, arise and gird yourselves for battle!

.....
Clothe your breast in the armour of faith,
and go with God, almighty giant!
Oh Russia, the dawning day is great,
the universal, Orthodox day!

159.

Once again I see your eyes.
Your southern gaze alone
has dissipated the slumberous cold
of a sad, Cymmerian night.
Before me rises up once more
a different land, a native land,
as if through the sins of their fathers
it's a paradise perished for the sons.

.....
Stately laurels rustle,
ripple the pale blue air.
The quiet breathing of the sea
wafts through summer heat.
All day ripening in the sun -
the golden vine.
A fabulous past of ancient tales
wafted from marble arcades.

.....
Like an ugly dream
the fateful north has vanished,
the light, fair vault of the sky
shines above me.
Once again with avid eyes
drinking in this bracing light,
beneath those pure rays
I recognise a magic land.

160.

How he loved the native firs
of his beloved Savoy.
How melodiously their boughs
rustled above his head.
With what sensual thought
their majestically gloomy
dark, wild, strange plaint
entranced his mind.

161. LAMARTINE

Apollo's lyre, oracle of the gods,
in his hands is the harp of Aiolos,
and his thoughts are winged, mellifluous,
as they float in the air, lulled by his words.

162. NAPOLEON

1

Revolution's Son, with a fearsome mother
fearlessly you entered battle,
drained of your strength in the struggle.
Your despotic genius could not overcome her!
Impossible conflict, pointless labour!
You carried it all in yourself.

2

Two demons served him.
Two forces merged wondrously within him:
in his head, eagles soared,
in his breast, serpents writhed:
a daring eagle-flight
of wide-spanned inspirations:
and in the very riot of audacity
there was a calculating serpent.
Yet no sanctifying power,
a force of which the mind cannot conceive,
illuminated his soul nor stepped towards him.
He was of earth, not God's flame.
He proudly sailed, despised the sea,
but on the hidden reef of faith
his fragile boat was smashed.

3

And there you stood, and Russia stood before you!
Prescient sorcerer sensing battle,
you yourself uttered the fateful words:
Let her destiny come about!
Your oath was not in vain:
Fate echoed your voice!
But from exile you tossed another riddle
at the fateful echo.
Years have passed. Now back from cramped exile
the corpse has returned to its native land.
On the banks of the river you loved,
turbulent spirit, you've rested now,
but you sleep lightly. Tormented during the night,

sometimes you will rise. You'll gaze at the East.
Suddenly, alarmed, you'll flee, as if you'd sensed
the breeze which ushers in the dawn.

163.

The loving heart cowers,
admitting sadness, anguish, fear.
I cry Stop! to the fleeing hours.
The moment could be here
when a chasm yawns between us .

.....

Frightful worry, implacable terror
constrict my wearied heart.
I've lived too much for both of us.
The past has weighed too heavy on my back.
Let's keep our love apart from memory.
Let history never claim us.

164. POETRY

Through conflagration, through thunder's roars,
through seething passion,
burning in elemental strife,
she comes to us from on high,
to earth-bound children,
with her gaze, her clear eyes
bright-shining,
and across the mutinous seas
a gentle oil of peace
cups in her palm ... and pours.

165. ROME AT NIGHT

Rome sleeps in the blue night.
The moon has risen, taken possession.
The city slumbers in unpeopled grandeur,
its thoroughfares awash in glorious light.
.....
How sweetly Rome lies slumbering in the rays.
How akin is the moon with Rome's ancient dust,
as if the lunar world, the sleeping city,
were one and the same: magic, they've outlived their days!

166. VENICE

The doge of free Venice,
among its azure ripples,
a groom porphyrogenitus,
to great and wide acclaim,
yearly wed his Adriatic.

.....

Not for nothing did he cast
his ring into these waters:

entire aeons, not just years,
(peoples marvelled at the wonder)
did this magic warrior-ring
bind them with its spell.

.....

Loving, peaceful did the couple
settle to a life of fame.
Three centuries, or maybe four,
mightier and wider growing,
spreading out into the world,
the shadow of the lion's wing.

.....

And now? Into oblivion's waves
so many rings were thrown!
Generations came and went.
These wedding rings have now become
the links of heavy chains!

167.

Feasting finished, choirs quiet,
wine-jugs drained,
fruit-baskets scattered,
glasses left with wine unfinished,
crumpled party crowns on heads,
only incense-sticks still smoking,
in the bright, deserted chamber,
having feasted, late in rising,
stars were shining in the sky,
night had reached its midway point.

.....

Above the restless city,
over courts and houses,
thoroughfares and noisy clatter
and the dull, red lighting,
over sleepless crowds of people,
over all this earthly tumult,
in the high, too distant heavens
pure stars were burning,
answering the gaze of mortals
with their uncorrupted shining.

168.

PROPHECY

This is not the murmur of rumour in the land.
This news was not just born for us.
It is an ancient voice! A voice from on high:
The fourth age comes to a close.
It will come to pass and the hour will crash out!

.....

Then Sofia's ancient vaults
will once more house Christ's altar
in restored Byzantium.
Fall before it, oh Tsar of Russia.
Rise as Tsar of all the Slavs!

169.

For the third year now, the tribes have run amok.
Spring has come. With every spring,
like a flock of wild birds before a storm,
the noise is more alarming. The cries become a Babel.

.....
Princes and rulers weighed by heavy thoughts,
fingers trembling on the reins,
minds depressed by ominous anguish.
People's dreams are wild as fever.

.....
But God is with us! Tearing from its bed,
a mad thing, full of threat and gloom,
suddenly rushing at us is the abyss!

.....
But your gaze did not darken!
The wind screamed. But... It will not be so!
You spake, and once again the waters fell away.

170.

Your cowardice can't be measured, you dwarf!
Squirm and wriggle as much as you like,
you'll not entice holy Russia
with your sceptical soul.

.....
Or will she renounce all her sacred hopes,
using up all her convictions,
that which is her calling,
just for the likes of you?

.....
Or are you so dear to providence,
so friendly with it, at one with each other
that, caring for your sloth,
it suddenly stops dead?

.....
Let whoever does not believe in holy Russia get on with it,
as long as she believes in herself,
and God will not postpone victories
to please people's cowardice.

.....
What was promised her by the fates
way back in her cradle,
bequeathed by the ages,
by the faith of all her tsars,

.....
what Oleg's troops
went out to achieve by the sword,
what Catherine's eagle
covered with its wings:

.....
the crown and sceptre of Byzantium,
you won't deprive us of that!
The universal fate of Russia,
No! You'll not block that off!

171.

Lord, send your comfort
to him who, during summer's scorching heat,
like some poor beggar past a garden,
along a hot road drags his weary feet,

.....

who gazes in passing across a fence
at the shades of trees, at valleys' golden grain
and at the inaccessible coolness
of softly bright, luxuriant plains.

.....

Not for him have forests woven
a welcome with their boughs and fronds;
not for him have fountains scattered
a misty haze above their ponds.

.....

A being made of mist, an azure grotto
tries vain enticement at his gaze;
his head cannot be cooled and freshened
by the fountain's dewy haze.

.....

Lord, send your blessing
to him who, trailing through life's heat,
like some poor beggar past a garden,
along a dry road drags his blistered feet.

172. ON THE NEVA

Once again the river surges
and the starlight seems to float,
once again has love entrusted
to the waves its secret boat.

.....

Between the river and the starlight
it slips, as if a dream befell
in which this pair of spectres travelled
far off across the river's swell.

.....

Are they slothful children
idling at the dead of night?
Are they blissful spirits
of this earth-world taking flight?

.....

Flowing hugely, like the sea,
luxuriantly, richly swelling,
Neva, conceal the modest boat,
its secret never telling!

173.

Midday breathes its hottest
through my window opened wide
into my peaceful bedroom.
Everything is still and dark inside.

.....

Sweet aromas live there,
wandering in the dusky shade.
In the sweet dusk of half-slumber
rest yourself and fade.

.....

A tireless fountain in the corner
sings away the nights and days.
Invisible dew it showers
on the dark, enchanted haze.

.....

In the glimmer of the half-light,
by some secret passion seized,
over an enamoured poet
a reverie is lightly breezed.

174.

Forget all cares, don't reason deep!
It's mad to seek, a half-wit judges.
You'll heal your daily wounds with sleep.
Take what tomorrow brings and bear no grudges.

.....

Live life and live it stoically:
live sadness, happiness and cares.
Don't wish, don't pine regretfully.
The day's lived through. Send God your prayers!

175.

Swelling, darkening waters
turn leaden in inclement air.
Through their severe lustre, rainbow hues
stroke the evening's crimson glare.

.....

It scatters golden sparks,
it sows fiery roses
and the current bears them down.
Above the dark-azure river
the tempestuous, fiery evening
tears off its crown.

176.

Unsullied gods of light
glow through azure nights.
Glory, stars, glory to your splendid rays,
glory to that which lasts without decay!
Earth's ephemeridae,
the instant we are born we start to fail,
watching, greeting as we pass you by:
Those about to die shout their immortal Hail!

177.

Prophetic sleep enfolds
sad, half-clad trees.
Perhaps every hundredth summer leaf,
glistening with autumn gold,
still trembles in the breeze.

.....

I share the scene, moved at the sight
when, through storm-clouds breaking,
suddenly on the mottled sheens
of exhausted, faded leaves
there's a lightning-splash of light.

.....

How charming are fading powers!
How delightful the sight
when what once so lived and flowered
is now so impotent and frail,
smiling at its own last rites!

178. TO COUNTESS E. P. ROSTOPCHINA (IN REPLY TO HER LETTER)

Just as under a snow drift of sloth,
as if enchanted by winter,
I slept the sleep of some departed soul,
interred, yet still alive!

.....

And right above me I sense,
neither awake nor yet asleep,
that it's as if spring has been wafted in,
as if something sang of spring.

.....

There's a familiar voice, a wondrous voice,
sometimes a lyre's note, at times a woman's sigh,
but I, unwakeable sluggard,
suddenly could not reply.

.....

I slept fettered by burdensome sloth,
during an eight-month winter,
as the just souls of the dead slumber
in the fateful Stygian murk.

.....

But this semi-sepulchral sleep,
no matter how it stretched above me,
itself, omnipotent sorcerer,
hastened to my assistance.

.....

It caught for me
expressions of old friendship
and into musical visions
it embodied the familiar voice.

.....

Now I see, as if through a haze,
a magic garden, a magic house,
and in the castle of the Unsociable fairy
suddenly the pair of us appeared together!

.....

Together! And her song resounded
and from the secret porch

chased the brash braggard
and the loathsome flatterer.

179. TWO VOICES

1

Be manly, my friends, in the fight do not tire.
The struggle's unequal, the conflict is dire!
Silent above you - the stars in the sky.
Beneath you are graves. Just as silent they lie.

.....

Olympus leaves gods not a thing to desire.
Eternally carefree, from work they don't tire.
Troubles and labours belong to mankind.
Man cannot know victory. Death's all he finds.

2

Be manly, fight on, my brave friends.
The battle is brutal, it seems without end.
Stars revolve silently over your heads.
Far below you - the mute, distant graves of the dead.

.....

Let Olympus with envious eyes gaze down
on this war of inflexible hearts.
The fighter who falls beneath Destiny's darts
has torn from their grasp the victory-crown!

180.

The desired structure,
the monolith of world Slavdom
will be raised only when, in full solemnity,
Russia and Poland can be at peace,
and these two will be reconciled
not in Petersburg, not in Moscow,
but in Kiev and in Tsargrad.

181. THE WAKE

Regal Troy has fallen.
Priam's city has been destroyed
and the Achaeans, preparing
their homeward voyage,
sat in their vessels
along the shores of the Aegean,
singing songs of praise,
loudly glorifying all the gods.
Ring out, victorious voices!
Ships, wing yourselves
to the shores of our native land,
on the path home, along a trouble-free way!

.....

In a long line too
there sat a sadly pale family,
the wives and maidens of fallen Troy,
complaining and crying

in the great and general grief,
crying for themselves,
and with the victorious, wild shouts
their wild lament was fused.
Bitter captivity awaits us
there, far off, in a foreign land.
Farewell, native land!
How the lot of the dead is to be envied!

.....
To make the sacrifice,
Calchas, priest of offerings, got up,
to sacrifice to the town-founding Pallas,
praying to the town-destroyer,
to the ominous strength of Poseidon
who engirdles the world,
and to you, aegis-bearer,
Zeus, who darkens the ether!
Toppled, annihilated
is the great city of Ilion!
The long, long quarrel has been resolved.
The judgement of the gods is immutable .

.....
Leader of dreadful hordes,
the king of kings, the son of Atreus,
cast his eye around the crowds of people,
having kept intact the order of his ranks.
With sudden anguish
the royal gaze darkened:
many of them had come to Troy,
few had returned.
So rise louder, voices of praise!
Sing and be joyful a hundredfold.
He who knows the golden return
has not been carried off by hostile fate!

.....
But not all are judged by God
to have a peaceful, joyful return:
on the threshold of many homes
does Murder stand guard.
Alive and well, returned from the battle,
in his own temple he perished!
Inspired by all-bountiful Athena,
thus spoke inspired Odysseus.
Only that home is steady and durable
where the law of the family is sacred:
the gullible way of women
is disloyal and shameful .

.....
With his wife, snatched in battle,
happy one more, Atreus
puts his arm around her splendid waist,
and his passionate looks are glad.
A wicked end awaits that which is wicked
Punishment follows dishonesty.
In heaven, the gods' court does not slumber!
Zeus's law rules.

A wicked end to a wicked beginning!
Zeus, governing by his rule of law,
visits fearsome vengeance on the law-breaker,
on him and his family.

.....

It's good for fortune's favourites ,
said Ajax's younger brother,
to honour with praise
the despotism of the Olympians.
Unsubservient to a higher power
is fortune in her whims:
Friend Patroclus is long in his grave
and Thersites still lives!
Destiny throws the dice
with her capricious hand.
Be happy and sing songs
if the luminary warms you!

.....

Be consoled, my dear brother!
Your memory is eternal!
You are the indestructible bulwark
of the Achaean children in their struggle!
On that fearsome day, that bloody day,
you alone stand for all of them!
But it was not the powerful one, it was the cunning one
who won the great revenge.
Not by the victorious hand of the foe,
but by your own did you fall.
Ah, but it's often the best of people
who are destroyed by pernicious anger!

.....

And now to your masterly
shade, valiant Pelides,
your son, Pyrrhus, glorious warrior,
prepares a libation.
My parent , he pronounced,
no-one but you has Zeus, the great designer,
raised to such earthly stature.
On earth, where nothing is constant,
there is no good higher than glory.
The earth will take our mortal dust.
The famous name is imperishable.

.....

Although about the fallen, the vanquished,
the victorious cries say nothing,
but among your far-off family,
Hector, you will be great!
Worthy of eternal memory,
saving his country,
honourable, brave warrior.
Thus the son of Tidaeus foretold.
Honour to him who unquailing
has lain down his life for his brothers!
The conqueror may have conquered,
but the fame of the fallen is more sacred!

.....
Now old Nestor, venerable
reveller, taking his cup, stands,
and the vessel, wreathed in ivy,
he gives to Hecuba:
Mother, drink, this healing stream
and forget your loss!
The magic juice of Bacchus is powerful,
it heals us miraculously!
Mother, taste the healing stream
and forget destiny's law.
It heals miraculously,
this magic gift of Bacchus.

.....
And the power of ancient Niobe
is oppressed by evil grief,
but she drank the wondrous juice
and was consoled.
Just let the goblet at the table sparkle
with paradisaal wine
and into the Lethe our grief will fall
falling like a key to its bed.
Yes, while in the cup there plays
the all-powerful wine,
grief is carried away to Lethe,
our grief drowns in the Lethe!

.....
And there rose at the farewell
the soothsayer-wife,
and she fulfilled a prophecy,
an inspired one,
taking one last time
the burned out ruins of her home:
Smoke and steam is all our life is,
immortality, oh gods, is for you alone!
As the plumes of smoke waft away,
so our days go by!
Gods, only you are eternal,
everything earthly goes by!

182.

Across the river's broad expanse you see,
as the waters come back to life,
floe following floe
into the all-embracing sea.

.....
Rainbow-glistening during the day,
or sailing through the murk of night,
ineluctably they thaw,
in the same direction they float away,

.....
all of them merging, large and small,
shadows of their former selves,
like the element uncaring,
as into the fateful pit they fall!

.....
Ah, human ego, you seduce
the mind of man!
Is this your only fate?
Is this your only use?

183.

How we murder while we love!
How, filled with passion's blind fury,
we are so consummately skilled
at destroying what is closest to our hearts!

.....
Was it long ago, proud of your gains,
that you told herself, She's mine! ?
Not a year has passed. Now ask yourself,
What's left of her?

.....
Where have the roses gone from your cheeks,
the smile from your lips, the sparkle from your eyes?
Tears have scorched every part of you,
burning ruts with their fiery streams.

.....
You remember the first day you met,
that first, that fateful time,
her magical gaze, the way she talked,
her childlike, vivacious laugh?

.....
What's left? Where has it gone?
And was the dream long-lived?
Alas like summer up in the north,
it was just a fleeting guest.

.....
She served her time in Fate's dread gaol -
your love did that for her -
lying across her life
like a shame she had never deserved.

.....
A life of denial, a suffering life!
In the depths of her soul
she clung to those memories she could,
though even they let her down!

.....
And she was shunned on earth.
All charm has passed her by.
Flooding in, the crowd trampled hard
into the mud whatever had bloomed in her soul.

.....
From this long calvary what,
like ash, has she managed to save?
Pain, evil, bitter pain,
pain without joy, without tears!

.....
How we murder while we love!
How, filled with passion's blind fury,
we are so consummately skilled

at destroying what is closest to our hearts!

184.

How I love to find again the source
of your life's early years,
listening, my heart entranced,
to its unchanging narrative.
What freshness! What mystery!
Walking these happy banks once more,
what a soft and tender light
bathes this misty sky!
What blossoms coloured the banks
of this stream which flowed so purely!
What beautiful reveries
were reflected in its blueness!
When you have spoken of your childhood,
which I have incompletely understood,
I have felt my body lifted in a breeze
and floating like veiled spring.

185.

I don't know whether grace will touch
my sickly-sinful soul.
Will it rise from the dead?
Will this spiritual torpor pass?
.....
If only my soul could find
peace here, on this earth,
that state of grace would be you,
you, my earthly providence!

186. THE FIRST LEAF

Young leaves are turning green.
See the youthful foliage
where birches stanced wafted,
airily, hazily green,
part-translucent, like mist.
.....
They've been dreaming of spring a long time,
spring and golden summer,
but now these living dreams,
beneath the first blue sky,
have burst upon the day.
.....
What beauty in these new-born leaves
washed in sunshine,
casting their first shadows!
And from their stirring we can hear
that in these thousands, through these shadowy masses,
you will not find a single leaf that's dead!

187.

You've often heard the admission:
I am not worthy of your love'.
She may be my creation,
yet how poor I am before her!

.....
Faced by your love,
it hurts to think back about myself.
I stand there, silently revering,
and I bow my head to you.

.....
When at times, so meekly,
with such faith, with such prayer,
involuntarily you kneel
before that dear cradle,

.....
where she sleeps, your creation,
your unnamed cherub,
remember my humility
before your loving heart.

188.

Today it's not the flesh - the spirit is laid bare.
Man longs in desperation.
He strives to leave the darkness for the light,
protesting and rebelling once he's there.

.....
Through non-belief he's dry and burned,
he tolerates what man should never bear,
aware at every step that he is ruined, not trying
to attain that faith for which he's always yearned.

.....
The door stays closed though he may grieve.
He'll never offer prayers nor tears.
He'll never call, My God, admit me, for I do have faith!
Come to my aid, for I cannot believe!

189. THE WAVE AND THE THOUGHT

Thoughts and the smooth ebb and flow of the tides
are simply one element having two sides.
In the cramped heart, in the breadth of the ocean,
in here they are captives, out there in free motion...
Always the same flow and ebb of the seas,
always that spectre of empty unease...

190.

Heat has not congealed
this glittering night in July
and above the dulling earth
the storm-pregnant sky
shimmers in summer lightning.

.....
Like heavy eyelids
lifting over earth,
through scampering lightning
threatening pupils
flashing now and then...

191.

Separation has this lofty meaning:
if love lasts years,
if but a day it takes,
love's just a dream
and we're a moment dreaming,
and whether early, whether late the waking,
the time must finally arrive when we awake.

192. (GOETHE)

Do you know the land where the myrtle and laurel bloom,
where deep and pure is the azure vault of the sky,
where the lemon flowers, and the golden orange
burns like a fire beneath its dense foliage?
Have you been there? There, there would I
like to hide away with you, my love.

.....
Do you know that summit with a path along its steep sides?
The nag wanders across the misty snows.
In mountain crevices there lives a family of snakes,
the avalanche thunders and the waterfall roars.
Have you been there? There, there with you
lies our path. Let's go away, my sovereign.

.....
Do you know the house of marble columns?
The hall shines and the cupola is radiant.
Idols look out, sad and silent.
What is it with you, poor child?
Have you been there? There, there with you,
let's go away quickly; let's go, my parent.

193.

Day turns to evening. Night approaches.
Shadows lie longer down slopes.
Clouds fade away
as it becomes late and evening encroaches.

.....
I do not fear the murk of night!
Nor do I regret the fading day

as long as you, my magic spectre,
as long as you don't leave my sight!

.....
Let your wings capture
me, soothe the agitation in my heart,

and the shade will be bliss indeed
for a soul in rapture.

.....

Who are you? Where are you from? How can I decide
if you're of heaven or of earth?
Perhaps you live in heaven,
but there's a passionate, female soul inside!

194.

Summer thunder's a happy ogre
eddy flying dust
when a storm, welling darkly huge,
troubles the blue of the sky,
and when a sudden dart of madness
pounces on a grove, making trees shudder
wide-leaved and noisily.
As if beneath some unseen foot,
the woody giants bend
their tops in anxious grumbles
of a secret conference.
Through the quick alarm
not a single bird stops whistling,
and somewhere in the middle of it all
the first yellow leaf,
tumbling along a road, announces fall.

195. FROM WILHELM TELL (SCHILLER)

Coolness and comfort waft up from the lake.
The youth has dozed off, lulled on the shore.
Blissful sounds
he hears in his sleep;
the faces of angels
singing on high.

.....

And now he's come out of his heavenly slumber,
embraced and caressed by the swell,
and he hears a voice,
like the thrumming of strings;
Come, handsome boy,
into my embrace!

196.

Not in vain has the gracious god
made the little bird easily scared.
To ensure it survives this life,
it's been created well and truly timid.

.....

No good will come of it. The poor bird
has to live with people, as part of the family of man,
and the nearer to them, the nearer to Fate.
It'll come to no good in their hands.

.....

Now here's a little bird which a girl,
from its fledgling feathers, from the very nest,
has nurtured, helped to grow
neither regretting nor sparing
caresses nor effort.

.....

But despite all the love and concern
you spend on it, love,
the day will come, my girl, you'll not avoid it,
when your careless ward
will perish at your hands.

197. PREDESTINATION

Love, tradition states,
is a union of kindred souls.
They join together, they combine,
fatefully they mingle
and it's a duel ordained by fate.

.....

Whichever is the tenderer
in this one-sided war of two hearts,
more surely, ineluctably will find
love and sad, numb delight ... and pain
as its exhausted, languid gain.

198.

Don't tell me that he loves me as he used to,
that, just as he used to, he places value on my life.
Don't! He's inhuman and he's driving me to ruin,
although his hand is shaking with the knife.

.....

Indignant then in tears, depressed then angry,
mad about him, stung to my very soul, I ache,
I suffer, cannot live ... Him, him alone I live by,
but what a life! My heart just wants to break!

.....

He measures out my air. He is so careful, meagre.
Why, his worst enemy would get a bigger share.
How painful now, how difficult my breathing,
although I do still breathe - It's life I cannot bear!

199.

Don't trouble me with your complaints,
although you're fully justified.
Much more than me they'll envy you,
your love and passion side by side.
I gaze in envy, angrily,

200.

What you guarded in your heart
like a tiny, frightened beast,

praying, protecting,
fate has grabbed by the scruff
and thrown into a lions' feast.

.....

The animals stormed
the inner sanctum of your heart,
and you were ashamed,
you could not help yourself,
at the secrets their claws ripped apart.

.....

God, if your soul had wings to leave your body,
to lift you by the nape
from the crudeness of the crowd,
to keep you safe
from man's eternal rape!

201.

I knew a pair of eyes. Oh, what a sight!
God knows I loved them dearly!
My soul could not be torn
from their magic, passionate night!

.....

Inscrutable was that gaze,
where life was bared to its depths,
such suffering I sensed there,
and such a depth of passion!

.....

Melancholy was their breathing,
deep in their dense lashes' shade,
languid as pleasure,
fateful as suffering.

.....

And on such marvellous days,
it never happened once
that I would meet them unperturbed,
without a tear springing to my eyes.

202. TWINS

There are twins. For the earthborn
they are gods, Death and Sleep,
like brother and sister wondrously akin,
Death's the gloomier, Sleep is gentler.

.....

But there are two more twins:
there are no finer twins in the world,
and there's no fascination more fearsome
than he who's surrendered his heart to them.

.....

They're no in-laws. Their union is one of blood,
and only on days ordained by fate,
with their unsolvable mystery
do they charm us, enchant, fascinate,

.....

and who, in an excess of sensation,

when blood boils and freezes in his veins,
can claim he's never tasted your temptations,
Suicide and Love?

203.

Mobile comme l'onde
Ocean-waves,
self-willed waves,
whether at rest or play,
how full you are of wondrous life!

.....

Laughing in the sun,
tossing back the sky's reflection,
heaving, throwing breakers at the world
in your watery, wild wilderness.

.....

I find your quiet whisper sweet,
caressing, love-filled;
your restless murmuring I hear,
your prescient moans.

.....

In the wild element,
gloomy or glad,
in your quiet, blue night
guard the secret you have taken.

.....

Not a treasured ring-gift
did I drop into your swell.

Not a precious stone
did I bury in your deeps.

.....

No, at a fateful moment,
lured by mysterious delight,
all my soul, my living soul,
I buried on your bed.

204. TO THE MEMORY OF V.A. ZHUKOVSKY

I saw your evening. It was fair!
Making my final farewell,
admiring its clear serenity,
utterly warmth-imbued ...
Oh, they burned and shone,
your rays, poet, your farewell rays.
Meanwhile, slowly we discerned
his night's first stars.

.....

He knew no falsehood. His was a wholeness of spirit.
In him, everything was in close harmony.
With such benevolent cordiality,
he read me those tales from Homer,
blossoming, radiant tales
from childhood's early years.

Meanwhile, the dusky, mysterious light
of the stars crept over them.

.....

In truth, he was whole and pure in spirit,
dove-like, though not despising
the serpent's wisdom; he understood it.
A pure dove's spirit wafted through him
and by this spiritual purity
he was a man, strong, shining from within.
His soul was elevated to a harmony.
Harmoniously he lived, harmoniously he sang!

.....

This lofty structure of his soul
which gave him life, nourished his muse
like the best fruit, like his greatest exploit,
he bequeathed to an agitated world.
Will the world realise it, evaluate the gift?
Are we worthy of this token?
Perhaps it was not about us that the divinity said,
"Only those of pure heart see God"!

205.

The sun is shining, waters glisten.
Everything smiles, everything lives.
Forests rustle joyously,
bathing in the blueness of the sky.

.....

Trees are singing, waters glisten.
Love has dissolved in the air
and the blossoming world of nature
is ecstatic in life's abundance.

.....

But in all this surplus of sensation
no joy is more acute than a single smile of emotion
from your tormented soul.

206.

The forest is entranced
by Winter the Magician.
Under velvet snow
it's mute, immobile, glistening
wondrously with life,
standing enchanted,
neither dead nor alive,
entranced by a magic dream,
entirely covered, fettered
by light links of snow.
Should winter's sun cast a sudden flare
glancing across its summits,
not a thing will shiver in it.
It will sparkle and flame
and be blindingly fair!

207.

LAST LOVE

On the final slope of years
our love's more tender, more superstitious.
Shine on, shine on, parting light!
Shine on, last twilit love!

.....
Half the sky is dark.
Only in the west a glimmer prowls.
Slow down, slow down, departing day,
stay longer, longer, charm.

.....
Should blood run thinner,
tenderness is just as full.
Ah, last love,
bliss you are, and hopelessness!

208. THE NEMAN

Neman, majestic Neman, is it you,
you flowing before me?
You, so long, so gloriously
guarding Russia faithfully?
Once, only once, by the will of God,
you let the Antichrist affront
the sacred integrity of our Russian land
and doing that, you made it firm forever!

.....
Neman, do you remember the past,
the day of that fateful year
when he stood above you,
he, that mighty southern demon,
when you, as now, flowed on,
surging under the bridges of the foe,
when he caressed you with his eyes,
with his wondrous eyes?

.....
His companies knew victories,
their banners gaily flapping,
the sun picked out their bayonets,
beneath the cannon bridges groaning,
and from on high, just like a god,
he seemed to soar above them,
moving, watching over every item
with his wondrous eyes.

.....
Just one thing he did not see,
this wondrous warrior, did not see
that there, upon the other bank, there stood
Another. Stood. Waited.
The companies went by
with awesome, warlike faces.
The inescapable Hand of Fate
put its stamp on every one.

.....
So, the companies had victories,
their banners blowing in the wind.
Their bayonets were like lightning,
sparkling as their drums resounded ...

Oh, they were countless!
Of this innumerable host marching by,
not a tenth, not a tenth,
escaped that fateful stamp!

209. A SPIRITUALISTIC PREDICTION

Days of battle and solemnity will come.
Russia will regain the frontiers bequeathed to her
and old Moscow will be
the newest of the three capitals.

210. TO A. S. DOLGORUKAYA

In her there lives charm, a marvel of pure delicacy,
a charm of mystery and melancholy,
and her soft presence is like an obscure dream
with which, without knowing how, the soul is filled.

211. SUMMER, 1854

What a summer! Such a season!
It's got to be pure magic.
How, I wonder, have we earned this
for no apparent reason?

.....

In some alarm my eyes are meeting
this glitter and this light.
Is someone poking fun at us?
Where is the source of such a greeting?

.....

Ah, it's like a youthful smile
on a woman's lips and in her eyes,
not ravishing, not tempting us,
disturbing our old age a while.

212.

What is more impotent and sad
than not knowing?
Who has the courage to say,
"See you soon!"
across an abyss of two or three days?

213.

You're not in the mood for verses,
our kindred, Russian tongue!
The harvest is ripe, the reaper is ready,
an unearthly time has come to pass.

.....

Lies have become steel incarnate.
God has somehow allowed
not a whole world to threaten you with calamity,
but an entire hell to threaten your downfall!

.....
Every blasphemous mind
and every-God-reviling race
has dredged up monarchies of murk
in the name of light and freedom!

.....
Preparing a cell for you,
they foretell your ignominy,
yours, the Word, life, enlightenment
of better days to come!

.....
Oh, in this stern trial,
in this final, fateful struggle,
be faithful to yourself,
justify your deeds to God.

214.

To merit one word, one comma, one full stop
of his inimitable pencil,
a devil would be converted,
an angle would offer itself to the devil.

**215. ON THE OCCASION OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE AUSTRIAN ARCHDUKE AT
THE**

FUNERAL OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS

No, there's a limit to one's patience,
there's also a limit to shamelessness!
I swear by his imperial shade,
not everything can be endured!

.....
No matter how loudly all around
people send up wails of anguish,
get this Austrian Judas away,
away from his royal tomb!

.....
Away with their traitor's kiss,
and let all their breed of apostles
be branded by one name:
Iscariot, Iscariot!

216.

Redness. Flaring.
Sparks spurt and fly.
Over the water there's a dark orchard.
From its copses coolness sighs.
Dusk. Heat. Shouting.
There's a dream I'm wandering through.
There's one thing I keenly sense:
you're in me while I'm with you.

.....
Crackle after crackle. Endless smoke.
A naked, protruding pall.

In inviolable peace,
leaves waft and rustle.
I'm fanned by their breath.
I catch your passionate words.
Thank God that I'm with you.
Being with you is paradise to me.

217.

In life there are moments you cannot convey,
the earthly paradise of selflessness.
Tree-tops rustle high above me
and only heavenly birds talk to me.
All that is vile and false becomes so distant.
All that is so touchingly-impossible so near and so light.
Then I feel good and things are sweet. There's peace within my soul.
Fanned by drowsiness, I say, "Time, please wait!"

218.

These poor villages, this sorry nature!
Long suffering is native to you,
land of our Russian people!
The proud foreign glance
cannot comprehend - would not even notice! -
what shines secretly through
your humble nakedness.
Burdened by his cross,
throughout your length and breadth,
in the rags of a slave, the Heavenly King
has walked, blessing you, my native land!

219.

From sea to sea the wire goes,
a slippery thread of iron.
Fame and grief are in abundance
at times along its path.

.....

Following it with his eyes,
the traveller will note at times
prescient birds which perch
along the grapevine.

.....

From the plain a raven
rises, blackly sitting on the line,
sitting, cawing,
gaily flapping wings.

.....

And it shouts and it exults
and it wheels above the wire.
Does the raven sense the blood
of news from Sevastopol?

220.

TO COUNTESS ROSTOPCHINA

Oh, in these days, these fateful days,
of trials and of losses,
let her return be a joyful one
to those places dear to her heart!

.....
Let the good spirit
speed her on to meet that
handful of friends still living,
so many dear, dear shades!

221. 1856

Blindly we face Fate.
It's not our task to tear away its cover.
These words are not my own,
but the prophetic rambling of spirits.

.....
We're a long way from our aim.
A storm is howling, a storm is growing,
and there you have it, in an iron cradle
the New Year's born in thunder.

.....
It's features are fearsomely stern
and there's blood on its hands and its brow,
but it's brought to man on his earth
more than alarms of war.

.....
It'll be more than just a warrior,
for it administers the punishments of God.
Like a late avenger, it will strike
a blow long thought out.

.....
It's sent for battles and reprisals,
it bears two swords:
one, the bloody sword of war,
the executioner's axe is the other.

.....
But for whom? For one neck along?
Is our entire nation doomed?
The fateful words are muffled.
Sleep beyond the grave is never clear.

222.

Oh, my prophetic soul!
Oh heart filled with alarm!
You'd think you beat upon the threshold
of a twofold existence.

.....
Yes, you inhabit two worlds:
your day is sickly, passionate,
your night prophetically unclear,
like the revelations of spirits.

.....
Let the suffering breast
be agitated by fateful passions.

The soul is ready, just like Mary,
to cling eternally to the feet of Christ.

223.

Be quiet, please! Don't dare wake me!
Oh, in this criminal, shameful age,
not to live, not to feel is a lot to be envied.
It's a pleasure to sleep, more pleasurable to be a stone.

224.

Yes, sleep is sweet, but it's sweeter not to have been!
In these times of misfortune and supreme shame
seeing nothing, feeling nothing, is indeed a high pleasure!
Don't dare wake me... I beg you, speak quietly!

225.

To serve God and Russia was never your intention.
Your conceit alone deserved your full attention.
Whether good whether bad, your every task
was nothing but spectral, false invention.
You had no throne - you wore an actor's mask!

226.

For him who served his native land
with faith and love,
served with thought and blood,
served with the word, served with his soul,
and whom providence has placed, not without good reason,
on the path of new generations,
a path of many difficulties,
and raised among the ranks of reliable warriors...

227.

What I've managed to keep alive
of hope, faith and love
has merged into one prayer:
survive, survive!

228.

A door should be open or closed.
You're starting to annoy me, dear,
so why don't you go to Hell!

229. TO N. F. SHCHERBINA

I fully understand the meaning
of your sickly dream,

your struggle, your striving,
your alarmed service
before the ideal of beauty.

.....

Like an imprisoned Hellene
sinking into sleep out in the steppes,
beneath blizzard-filled Scythian skies,
who hallucinates about golden freedom
and the sky of his native Greece.

230. (SCHILLER)

Fortune had an argument with a favourite
and flew off to poor Wisdom:
"Sister, give me your hand and my grief
will be lightened by your friendship.

.....

With my best gifts
have I showered him, like his mother,
and what does he do? Never satisfied,
he dares to call me mean!

.....

Sofia, believe me, let's be friends!
Look, here are piles of silver.
Throw aside your spade. You no longer need it.
I'll be enough for you, dear sister."

.....

"Fly off!" Wisdom answered her.
"Don't you hear me? Your friend curses life -
save the madman from the knife,
but I've no need of Fortune."

231.

His fine day has disappeared in the West,
having embraced half the sky with an immortal twilight,
and he, from the depths of northern skies,
he himself looks down on us like a prophetic star.

232.

Above this ignorant crowd
of people not yet awake,
will you ever rise, Freedom,
will your golden rays gleam?

.....

Your ray will shine and revive them,
chasing sleep and mists,
but old, rotten wounds,
the weals of abuse and contempt,

.....

the decaying of souls and the void
that gnaws the mind and pains the heart,
what can heal that, what can cover it up?
Only you, Christ's pure image.

233.

There is a fleeting, wondrous moment
during autumn's early days:
time stands motionless, time's a crystal,
evenings bathe in brilliant rays.

.....

Where sickles swung and crops were toppled,
there's just an empty wasteland now.
A strand of glittering web is all you notice
across an idle track cut by a plough.

.....

The air has emptied. Birds no longer chatter,
though there's some time to wait for winter's snow and rain,
and pure and warm, a gentle blue is flowing
across the resting plains.

234.

Look at the coppice!
Foliage awash in scorching sun,
wafting sweet comfort around me,
from every bough and leaf it runs!

.....

Let's go inside and sit above the roots
of trees fed by that rill,
where trees waft in their thousands
the stream which whispers in the dusky still.

.....

Delirium runs her fingers through the leafy summits
suspended in the midday heat
and every now and then an eagle screeches,
from very far away.

235.

When your eighteen years
will be a dream for you as well,
with love, with quiet tenderness,
remember it, remember us.

236. TO E. N. ANNENKOVA

Are you trying to borrow the features
of a northern girl, a frail, languishing creature
born amid the gloom of forests,
you, laughing, shining songstress?
I cannot help it, forgive me,
but it seems to me, on seeing this picture,
that an orange-blossom bathed in light
is trying to mimic a birch-tree.

237.

At times when there is

depression in our breasts,
when the heart is tormented,
when ahead there is only mist,
when, powerless and static,
we're so crushed
that even our dear friends' consolations
cease to amuse us,
suddenly a sun-ray greets us,
stealing stealthily up,
fire-colouredly splashing
in a stream across the walls,
and from the benevolent sky,
from the blue heights,
a sudden fragrance
flutters into our window

.....

Admonitions and advice
are not what it brings
and it will not save us
from fate's calumny,
but we sense its power,
hear the bliss in it,
and we feel less anguish,
and it's easier to breathe.
Just as wonderfully paradisaical,
aerial, bright -
- but a hundredfold! -
your love has been to me!

238.

She was sitting on the floor
sorting letters which were old,
holding them before she threw them out
like ash gone cold.

.....

Her look was strange
while she held those pages she knew so well,
as if she were a soul which peered down
at its abandoned shell.

.....

So many irreversible events,
such life fulfilled and filled
with minutes of love and joy across the years!
How many grief-packed minutes killed!

.....

Silent, I stood to one side
and my knees were ready to bend
as a fearful sadness crept into my heart,
as if at the ghost of a dear, old friend!

239. PEACE

When what we called our own
has left us forever
and, as if we lay in our grave,

there's a heavy weight upon us,
.....
we can always cast a fleeting glance
across the waters' slope
where streams flow headlong,
wherever the current leads.

.....
Jostling each other,
the currents run, hurry
to some fateful summons
they've heard in the distance.

.....
Vainly we observe them.
They'll never return,
but the longer we watch,
the easier we breathe.

.....
Tears spring to our eyes
and through them we see,

excitedly bubbling,
everything more swiftly born away.

.....
The soul becomes oblivious
and feels right then
that it too is borne away
by omnipotent waters.

240.

Late in autumn
I love the park of Tsarskoe Selo,
when a still half-dusk
seems to drown it in slumber
and winged visions of white
in the lake's dull glass,
voluptuously mute,
hang limply in the dusk.

.....
On the royal steps
of Catherine's halls
lie twilight shadows
of early October evenings.
Like thickets of oaks,
the gardens darken.
Like a reflection of a glorious past,
out of the murk with the stars
a golden cupola emerges.

241. ON THE JOURNEY HOME

1.
Dismal hour, dismal sight ...
Speeding onwards through the night ...
Look, a phantom rising from the dead,

the moon has risen in the misty air,
lighting up the wastes ahead ...
There's far to go - do not despair!

.....

As we ride, into my mind
steals the place I've left behind ...
Its moon's alive and it delights
in breathing Lake Leman's cool air.
Wondrous country, wondrous sights!
There's far to go - on through the night!

2.

I was born here,
where giant snow-clouds list
and let faint hints of blue
filter down to touch dark woods
muffled in late autumn mist.

.....

No life at all here ...
Boundless silence, dull and bare ...
The scene's drab greyness broken
only where stagnant pools, touched by first ice,
are glinting here and there.

.....

Not a sound here,
nor colour, movement - life's a drying stream.
Submissive to his fate,
in an oblivion of exhaustion
man exists but in a dream.
His eyes are dulled like fading day.
Although he's only just been there,
he can't believe in lands where lakes reflect
blue mountains caught in golden rays.

242.

There are many tiny, unnamed
constellations in the lofty sky,
indistinguishable one from the other
to our weak, hazy eyes.

.....

No matter how they shine,
it's not for us to judge their glitter.
Only the telescope's wondrous power
may be able to reach them.

.....

But there are different constellations,
sending different rays:
like fiery-living suns
they shine to us at night.

.....

Their bracing, joy-bearing
beacon is a boon to our souls
everywhere, on land and sea.
We see it everywhere before us.

.....

Delight of this earthly world,
they are the beauty of the kindred heavens,

and for these stars you don't need glasses.
You can see them if you're myopic.

243. FOR HER IMPERIAL MAJESTY

Glamour, illusion, magic and fable:
all render homage and fall at your feet.
One feels, wherever you appear,
that Truth is the one adorable feat.

244. FOR GRAND DUCHESS HELENE

In this palace, whatever takes place,
nothing is unlikely and everything is in its place:
faery is always at home here,
for that is the way things are done here.

245. A DECEMBER MORNING

The moon's still out.
Night has still not budged,
just ruling, unaware
that day is coming to,
albeit lazily and timidly.
Ray after ray creeps out of cloud,
though night in majesty
still shines across the sky.
Just give it three or four more moments
and night will dissipate,
while in its blinding fullness
day will show itself and claim the earth.

246. TO E.N. ANNENKOVA

Into daily life
come radiant dreams
by which we're suddenly whisked off
to unfamiliar lands, to magic worlds,
alien, yet worlds our soul knows well,

.....
and from the light-blue sky we see,
in an unearthly radiance wafting down,
a different nature,
having neither dawn nor sunset.
Another sun is shining there.

.....
Everything is better, brighter, larger,
so far from what is earthly,
so different to everything we're used to
and in the pure, flaming sky
the soul is so light-heartedly at home.

.....
We've woken up. The vision ends.
We've no means to restrain it.
Beneath a dull, still shadow,

life grabs us back again,
condemns us to our cell.

.....

Persisting, there's a sound we barely hear,
ringing out above us,
before our soul, tormented, longing,
that irresistible glance remains,
that very smile we glimpsed in dreams.

247. FROM JAKOB BOHME

Whoever has combined in himself
Time and Eternity,
has protected himself
from every grief.

248.

"Sceptical" sums up the way I feel,
Holy Russia, about your worldly affairs:
once you were a peasant shack.
You now have a corner under the stairs!

249.

Tracing its path across the sky,
does the sun know
that it alone pours life into nature
with its golden brilliance,

.....

that with its rays God draws
tracery on blossoms,
gives the gift of fruit to the farmer
and scatters pearls around the river?

.....

You, casting (your dear)
glance around, do you know
that all my life and strength
are in your fiery gaze?

250.

From these empty lands, from this wintry weather,
go to that land where the sea always shines,
go with a greeting, my feeble lines,
go on with you, greet my daughter.

251. REMEMBER

(Vevey 1859 - Geneva 1860)

I recall her final glances
at this land, this lake, these mountains
luxuriantly glorious in the west's last beams.
As if through the mist of a laboured illness,
she tried at times to catch a wondrous spectre.

She was so in sympathy with this entire world.

.....
How in their dim outlines she loved
these mountains, waves and stars,
loved with her keen, loving soul.
And in dissolution's approaching strife,
what tender feelings lived in her
before this ever-youthful life.

.....
The Alps gleamed, the lake breathed.
It was here, through tears, that we came to understand
that whoever's soul is regally bright,
whoever has kept it alive to the end,
at the terrible, fateful moment,
will always be as they were.

252.

Though I've built my nest in valley,
still there are times when I know
that somewhere far above me, life-pulsing
aerial currents flow.
At times like that I'd leave this stifling world,
towards those heights impelled,
when everything which suffocates
I desperately need to repel!

.....
I can gaze for many hours
at inaccessible massifs
which pour their coolness, rain such showers
noisily towards me!
In sudden iridescence
bursts into light the virgin snow.
That's when I see the traces on the summits
where unseen angels go.

253.

Old Hecuba, alas, so long so sorely tried,
after many reverses and disasters,
finds refuge in your youthful goodness,
rested and washed by your side.

254.

ON THE OCCASION OF PRINCE PYOTR ANDREEVICH VYAZEMSKY'S

JUBILEE.

The Muse has catholic tastes,
unequal in her generosity,
one hundredfold more godlike than good fortune,
but equally capricious.

.....
Some she'll foster at daybreak,
kissing their young curls' silk,
but should the breeze blow warmer
she will flee as they awake.

.....
Others, in a hidden meadow, by a brook,

she'll visit unexpectedly,
delight with a chance smile,
but she'll make her first tryst her last!

.....

That didn't happen to you:
catching you in youth with perfect timing,
she loved you with passion in her soul
gazing long and hard at you.

.....

She didn't pass you by. With time to spare
she nourished, caressed, cared tenderly
for your talent. Her love became
more tender year by year.

.....

Just as with the years the strength and fire
of the noble vine develops,
so in your goblet hotter, brighter,
inspiration poured.

.....

Never did such wine as now
crown your cup of fame.
In honour of the goddess, prince,
let's raise the foaming vessel!

.....

In honour of the goddess who nobly preserved
the sacred legacy of the soul,
our native tongue. Let her grow freely
and fulfil her great task!

.....

Then, reverently silent,
we'll hold a sacred repast for the dead,
a triple libation
to three unforgettably dear ones.

.....

There is no echo to the voice that calls them,
but on this bright festival of your saints-day
is there anyone who cannot feel their presence,
Zhukovsky, Pushkin, Karamzin!

.....

We believe right now that these invisible guests
leave their celestial world
to hover lovingly among us,
sanctifying our feast.

.....

In the name of your Muse, we follow
with a goblet to drink a toast.
Let the wine in this bright cup
sparkle and foam for years!

255.

Once I was a major, many years ago.
You promised me a future:
the glitter of a general's epaulettes.
What rank I have now beats me,
but as your batman, it's time to go,
Field Marshall of the Russian intellect.

256. TO ALEXANDER II

You seized your day, marked out in this age
by the lord's great grace.
He displaced the form of slavery from man,
returned the younger brother to the family.

257.

I knew her even then,
in those fabulous years when,
before the morning ray
of the earliest days,
a star already drowns in the blue sky,
and she was as she'd always been,
filled with that fresh charm
of pre-dawn darkness
when, unheard and unseen,
dew touches flowers.
At that time her life
was so complete, so whole
so alien to things of earth,
you'd think she too had travelled far,
hiding in the sky just like the star.

258.

Not for nothing have you remembered the sounds
of Russian from childhood,
caring for them within yourself with lively sympathy.
Now, at the height of your science and between two worlds,
you stand as a universal mediator.

259. TO PRINCE P.A. VYAZEMSKY

It's not the same now as it was six months back.
There's no longer that close circle of friends.
Great nature herself celebrates your jubilee.
See to what lengths she has gone
to prepare this feast for you,
all this shoreline, this sea,
this whole wondrous world of summer.
With its foot on the last step
and with light poured over it,
this magnificent day says farewell to its poet.
Fountains quietly waft and splash,
the garden breathes in slumberous coolness,
and Peter's limes rustle so jubilantly above you.

260.

Play while above you
the sky is still cloudless.
Play with people, play with fate,
you - life destined for battle,

you - heart greedy for storms.

.....

How often, tormented by sad dreams,
I look at you in anguish,
my gaze clouding with tears.
Why? What have we in common?
You're going to live, I'm going away.

.....

I've sensed the morning dreams
of the barely woken day,
but late, living storms,
passions' outbursts, passions' tears,
no, none of this is for me!

.....

But perhaps in summer heat
you'll recall your spring.
Oh, remember this time too
as we would a vague dream
escaping us as dawn approaches.

261. ON SENDING THE NEW TESTAMENT

Fate did not select for you
an easy nor a happy lot,
and very early on you entered
into unequal combat with merciless life.

.....

You fought with rare courage
and in this fateful struggle
every fibre of your soul endured
the very harshest trials.

.....

No, life did not defeat you
and in the hopeless fight
not once, my dear, not once did you betray
the truth in your heart, nor yourself.

.....

But earthly powers are feeble:
malicious life will suddenly rage insanely
and, as if about to be buried,
we will suddenly feel such depression.

.....

At such times, remember
this book with love,
let all your soul incline to it
and rest, the way you'd sink into your pillow.

262. TO BOTH NICHOLASES

We wish all the very best
to both Nicholases
and greet them with heartfelt sincerity.

263.

He used to be a gentle cossack.

The fool now tries to administrate.
He's Philip's son, I suppose, but still
he's no Alexander the Great.

264. TO A.A. FET

My heartfelt greeting to you,
and, such as it is, here's my portrait.
Sympathetic poet, let it
tell you, silently at least,
how dear your greeting was to me,
how touched my soul was by it.

265.

Nature has endowed some with a sense
which is prophetically sightless from its birth.
They feel with it, they hear waters
dark-flowing in the deeps of earth.

.....

You are beloved of the great Earth-Mother:
more coveted by far your lot has been,
for often, through the surface cover,
into her very eyes you've seen!

266. THE SACRED MOUNTAINS

Quietly, softly over Ukraine,
the July night lies
like a fascinating secret.
The sky has gone in so deeply on itself,
the stars burn so high
and the Donets glistens in the dark.

.....

Sweet hour of peace!
The peeling of bells, the prayers, the psalms
of Svyatogor are silenced.
Beneath the walls of their dwelling,
illuminated by the moon,
the monks sleep in peace.

.....

A gigantic outcrop,
wondrously white,
the cliff stands above the Donets,
raising its cross to Heaven
like an eternal sentry
guarding the monks.

.....

It is said that in its womb,
locked away, as if in a grave,
a wondrous monk lived
in severe abnegation for many a year,
shedding so many tears before God,
lavishing so much faith!

.....

It's for that that at night,
with a strength that lives even today,
above the Donets the cliff stands,
and, with this sacred place of prayer,

abundant in grace even today,
it enlivens the sleeping world.

267.

For itself this story speaks,
the plot's not hard to unravel:
our dirty Russian pub has travelled
right up to the Caucasian peaks.

268.

We've been burdened by a horrible dream,
a horrible, ugly dream:
up to our ankles in blood, we're fighting corpses
resurrected for fresh funerals.

.....

These battles have already lasted eight months,
this heroic ardour, the treachery and lies,
a den of thieves in a house of prayer,
crucifix and dagger in the same hand.

.....

The entire world seems drunk on falsehood.
There's every form and trick of wickedness!
No, never has God's justice been so insolently called
to battle by the injustice of man!

.....

This cry of blind sympathy,
a universal summons to frenzied conflict,
the depravity of minds, the distortion of the word,
it's all risen up and threatens you,

.....

oh native land! Such a call to arms
has not been heard since the earliest times.
Russia, it seems you have a great significance!
Be valiant, stand firm, be strong and overcome!

269. TO HIS GRACE PRINCE A.A. SUVOROV

Humane grandson of a martial grandfather,
forgive us, nice prince,
for honouring the Russian cannibal,
we Russians not having asked Europe's permission!

.....

How on earth can we excuse this cheek to you?
How can we justify agreeing with
someone who stood up for and saved the integrity of Russia,
sacrificing everything to his calling,

.....

who took upon himself, in desperate conflict,
all the responsibility, all the labour, all the burden,
and who, raising it to life, shouldered
the entire, poor, tormented tribe,

.....

who, chosen to be the bull's-eye of all sedition,
stood and stands, peaceful, unharmed,
in spite of foes, their lies and evil-mouthing,
in spite, alas, of his own people's banalities?

.....

So let this letter to him from us, his friends,
be a shameful piece of testimony!
What we need, prince, is your great grandfather.
At least he'd have signed it himself!

270.

Just as now and then during summer
a bird will flutter into the room,
bringing with it life and light,
announcing, illuminating,
pulling after it into our nook
the blossoming world of nature,
green woods, living waters
and the gleam of a blue sky,
so did our guest pay
a transient, aerial visit
to our stuck-up stifling world,
shaking us all from sleep.
Warmed by her presence,
life shook its feathers anew,
and even Peter's summer
thought of thawing out when she arrived.
While she was here, old age became young again
and experience became an apprentice.
She twisted this diplomatic milieu
around her little finger.
It was as if our entire house came to life,
choosing her as its inhabitant,
and already we were less troubled
by the tireless telegraph.
But all charms are short-lived.
It's not their lot to stay with us,
so now we've had to say goodbye,
though we'll not forget for a long, long time
those unexpectedly charming impressions,
those dimples on rosy cheeks,
those comfortably stately movements,
and that upright figure,
and hearty laugh and resonant voice,
the semi-cunning light of her eyes,
and that long, fine hair
which even fairies' fingers couldn't hold.

271.

TO N.I. KROL

Cold September rages.
Russet leaves fall from trees.
Dimming day is a haze.
Night falls. Mist rises.
In my heart and to my sight -
everything so colourlessly cold,
unresponsively sad.
A sudden song bursts out
and by some charm
the mist curls up and flies away,
the sky is blue once more,
clothing itself in radiance,
and everything is green again,
everything turns into spring.
This fantasy stayed with me
all the time your little bird was singing.

272. FEBRUARY 19TH., 1864

With his last, quiet steps
he approached the window. Evening was coming
and with rays as pure as grace
it shone and burned in the west.
He recalled that year of renewal,
that great day, that day born of the New Testament,
and the shade preceding death shone
from his face, emotion-filled.

.....

Two cherished, kindred images
which he bore in his heart like a sacrament,
appeared to him: the tsar and Russia,
and he blessed them both and with all his heart.
He lowered his head to his pillow,
the final struggle accomplished.

Then with love did the saviour himself
release his true, obedient servant.

273.

Not always does the soul have sickly dreams:
spring's arrived, once more the sun will beam.

274.

The breeze has dropped and lighter is the breath
of the blue assembly of Geneva's waters.
A boat rows across it again.
Another swan ripples it.
The sun burns all day as if it were summer.
Trees sparkle in motley hues,
their frail showiness lulled
by the air's caressing billow.
And there, peacefully solemn,
disrobed since early morning,
Mont Blanc is shining

like some unearthly revelation.
My heart could forget everything here,
could forget all its torment,
If only back home there were one grave less.

275.

All day she lay oblivious.
To lie across her body shadows came.
Outside the tepid rain of summer streamed,
splashing through the trees in happy games.

.....
She lay for quite some time absorbed
as slowly she came round,
consciously immersed in thought,
beginning to listen to the sounds.

.....
As if conversing with herself,
she said, and she was fully aware,
(I was with her, crushed, but still alive.)
"Oh, I loved it all so much out there!"

.....
You love - at loving as you could,
no-one's yet arrived.
Oh Christ, without my heart exploding,
to have this to survive!

276.

Like an unresolved mystery,
living charm breathes in her.
We note with a tremor of alarm
the quiet life of her eyes.

.....
Is this charm terrestrial in any way?
Is it some earthly grace?
My soul would like to pray
but my heart strives to adore

277.

Oh, this south, oh, this Nice!
How their glitter troubles me.
Life's like a bird that's been shot
and wants to rise but cannot.
It wants to spread its wings,
it wants to fly again
but they just hang,
feeble, broken things,
and it grips the ground
and shivers in impotent pain.

278.

No matter who you are, just meeting her,

with pure or illicit thoughts,
you will suddenly feel more acutely
that there's a better world, a spiritual one.

279. AN ENCYCLICAL

Once, the hammer of the justice of the Lord
smashed and destroyed the primal temple
where the high priest gasped his last,
impaled upon his own sword.

.....

More fearsome, more implacable, God demands that he atone
on these days of heavenly judgement
in apostate Rome, and capital sentence will be passed
on that Pretender to Christ's throne!

.....

Passing centuries disguise
black deeds and lying rumours,
but God in his justice cannot pardon
this latest in a string of lies.

.....

No human being will win
the right to kill this earthly ruler,
living by the sword of man so long himself.
He will be destroyed by his own fateful words:
"Think for yourself and you sin!"

280. TO PRINCE GORCHAKOV

Yours has been a fateful calling,
but whoever summoned you will be observing.
All that is best in Russia, anything with life in it,
is watching you, believing, waiting.
You saved the honour
of deceived, insulted Russia.
Nothing deserves more praise.
Today you're faced with other feats of bravery.
Stand up for the thought, save the spirit.

281.

Ocean-billows, night-surgings,
here radiant, there blue-grey,
living creature, washed in moon-rays,
breathing, striding, glimmering...
The water-world has no skyline. Bare
but for sparkling movement, growling thunder.
The sea is shot with dull light.
How good it is in the unpeopled night!
Sea-flanks swell above, monstrous currents under.
Whose feast is this? What celebration?
Waves rush, thunder, glisten.
Stars sense them, gaze, listen.
in this shining, in this agitation,
in a dream I am lost.
Into this world I would sink whole,

I would stand up to my soul
immersed, ocean-tossed.

282.

When God has deferred assent,
no matter how the loving soul suffers,
its suffering will never win it joy,
though it might come to realise itself.

.....

Soul, my soul, you gave yourself wholly
to cherished love alone,
breathing by it, suffering by it.
May the Lord bless you, soul!

.....

He, the charitable, the omnipotent,
He, warming with his rays
luxuriant flowers blossoming in the air,
and the pure pearl on the bed of the sea!

283. IN REPLY TO AN ADDRESS

Friends, you're behaving like boors,
to native Russia delivering your snub.

You think you're members of the English Commons?
You're only members of the English Club!

284.

In the martyrdom of my stagnation
are hours and days which intensify the pain.
Their weight is crushing, fatal's their oppression.
Verse can't endure it, verse cannot explain.

.....

Everything dies. Tears and affection
close their doors! So empty and dark all around.
The past no longer wafts its clear shadow:
like a corpse, it lies beneath the ground.

.....

Above it, in bright reality,
loveless, where sun-rays never fall,
there's an impassive, soulless world
which neither knows, nor can remember her at all.

.....

I'm alone in my submissive tedium.
I want to know myself, to be aware;
I can't, a shattered boat thrown up by breakers
upon a nameless shore that's wild and bare.

.....

Lord, let me burn with suffering.
Dispel the deathliness cramping my soul.
You've taken her, but all the living torment,
the painful memory of her leave whole.

.....

Let me remember her, life's task fulfilling,

fighting her final conflict of despair,
loving with love so fierce and so burning,
facing fate and people's slander unafraid,

.....

her, her who, never defeating fate,
vowed all the same that fate would never win,
her, her who till the end was able
to bear such pain, to pray, believe - to love!

285.

Dying, he doubted,
tormented by an ominous thought,
but not for nothing had God spoken in him.
God is loyal to His chosen ones.

.....

One hundred years of toil and woe have passed
and now, more manly with each passing day,
our Native Speech, given full play,
celebrates his wake.

.....

No longer ensnared,
freed from former fetters,
in all its intellectual freedom
it pays its compliments to him.

.....

And we, grateful grandsons,
for all his good deeds,
in the name of Truth and Learning,
sing Eternal Memory.

.....

Yes, his significance is great,
true to the Russian mind
he fought for Enlightenment for us,
not enslaving us to it.

.....

Like that Old Testament fighter
who struggled till dawn
with an unearthly Power
and survived the nocturnal battle.

286.

In Nice the tsar's son is dying.
They'll forge shackles for us out of this.
"It's God's vengeance for the Poles" -
that's what they're saying here in the capital.

.....

Whose crazy, narrow brain
could give birth to such ideas?
Whose? Some Polish priest's?
Or one of Russia's minister's?

.....

Oh, all these fateful rumours,
this criminal, wild mumbling
of our native land's black sheep

will not be heeded by Russia!

.....

Learn your lesson! Let's not hear
that fearful cry resound, as in the past:
"Treason's abroad! The tsar's been taken!"
Russia won't save him then!

287. APRIL 12TH., 1865

It's all been decided and he is at peace,
he, enduring till the end,
though it seems he was worthy before God
of a different, better crown,

.....

another, better inheritance,
the inheritance of his god,
he, our joy since childhood,
he wasn't ours, he was His.

.....

But between him and us
there are bonds stronger than nature:
with every heart in Russia
now he prays for her,

.....

for her, whose sorrow and trials
are understood and gauged only by the one
who, sanctifying herself through suffering,
stood crying by the cross.

288.

How truly has the common sense of folk
defined the sense of words:
not for nothing, it's clear, from "caring"
has it derived the term "to croak".

289.

Est in arundineis modulatio
musica ripis.

The sea is harmony.

Shapely in debate, all elements cohere.

Rustling in the river's reeds,
musical designs inhere.

.....

Imperturbable form is the outward sign
of nature's utter consonance.

Only our spectral liberty
imparts a sense of dissonance.

.....

Whence this disharmony? How did it arise?
In the general chorus, why this solo refrain?

Why do our souls not sing like the sea
and why must the thinking reed complain?

.....

And why, from earth to the farthest stars

(even today there's no reply)

do we hear a protest in the void,
the soul's despairing cry?

290. TO MY FRIEND YA. P. POLONSKY

Living sparks no longer answer friendly banter.
There's deepest night in me. Dawn it will not see.
Soon there'll fly into the gloom, unnoticed,
The dying fire's thin smoke, the last there'll ever be.

291.

You commanded, though, perhaps, in jest,
and I shall carry out your orders.
This is no place for hesitation, nor for reason,
and even wisdom is crazy about you,
.....
and even he, your glorious grandfather,
though he'd out-argue all of Europe,
gave in in the unequal battle
and sued for peace at your feet.

292. TO PRINCE VYAZEMSKY

There's the telegraph if you've got no legs.
Let it bear to you my partly ailing verse.
May God preserve you in his goodness
from all kinds of squabbles, alarms, troubles,
as well as from insomnia at night.

293.

Poor Lazarus, wretched Iros,
with effort and in turmoil
I write to you, getting up from my sick bed,
and let my lame greeting
be given wings by the telegraph.
.....
Let it hasten it on, playing,
to that wonderful, bright corner
where all day, never silent,
it's as if a rain storm
sings in green copses.

294.

It's fifteen years today, my friend,
since that blissful fateful day
when she breathed all her soul into me,
poured her whole being into me.
.....
It's already a year now, uncomplaining, not reproaching,

everything lost, that I greet my fate:
to be so frightfully alone until I die,
as alone as when beneath the earth I'll lie.

295.

The East is doubtful, silent.
Everything is keenly quiet.
What is it? Dream or expectation?
Is day distant or near?
The mountains' napes are barely white.
Mist still lies on woods and dales.
Towns sleep. Hamlets doze,
but just look up ...

.....
Look: see the band of light
which seems to glow with hidden passion.
Brighter, more alive,
burning right through ...
Another moment - across
the boundless skies
a universal pealing heralds
the sun's triumphant rising.

296.

ON THE EVE OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF AUGUST 4TH., 1864

Wandering along the highway
as daylight quietly dies...
Depressed. My legs don't want to move.
My darling, can you see me?

.....
It's getting darker, darker over all the earth.
Day's last glimmer flying off...
That's the world I shared with you.
Angel, can you see me?

.....
Tomorrow we pray and grieve.
Tomorrow we recall that fateful day.
My angel, wherever souls go,
My angel, can you see me?

297.

Unexpectedly and brightly,
moist across the blueness of the sky,
an airy arc has been erected.
Triumphant, it will soon pass by.
One arm has plunged into the forest.
Beyond the clouds the other sweeps.
Half the sky it has encompassed.
It's reached its highest point and sleeps.

.....
This iridescent vision
is pure delight for human eyes.

It's given us for just a moment,
so catch it. In your grasp it lies!
Look again. It's paling.
One second more its colours glow.
It's gone. It's vanished just as surely
as what you breathe and live by goes.

298.

Sad night creeps
across an earth beset
neither by thought nor threat
but by joyless, sluggish sleep.
Lightning brightens the scowls,
winking intermittently
like deaf-mute ghouls
debating heatedly.

.....

A sign has been agreed:
the sky's alight. A sudden surge
snaps from the murk with sudden speed
and fields and distant woods emerge.
Then again they're under shrouds.
You sense it all go darkly still up there,
and if in camera some high affair
they'd ratified above the clouds.

299.

Not a day relieves the soul of pain,
of pain about the past,
seeking words, not finding them,
drying, drying with every day,

.....

just like the anguish-burning exile,
bemoaning his lost land,
discovering on the bed of the sea
that it's buried in the sand.

300.

Let foul slander rage,
labour to crush her with lies.
Every demand quails
before the candour of her eyes.

.....

Sincere and lovely,
of wondrous form,

her cloudless soul's a sky
untroubled by storms.

.....

Not a speck of dust adheres
when those nauseating churls
sow their stupid calumny
which cannot even crumple

the airy silk of her curls!

301. TO COUNTESS A.D. BLUDOVA

However meagre life becomes,
however much we're forced to come to terms
with what is clearer every day in any case,
that just surviving isn't living,

.....

in the name of a dear past,
in the name of your father,
let's promise one another
never to betray ourselves.

302.

So he's saved! Could it turn out otherwise?
A sense of joy has flooded Russia.
But amidst the prayers, amidst our grateful tears,
one thought persists and gnaws our hearts:

.....

with just one shot, everything in us has been insulted,
and there seems no escape from this slap in Russia's face.
It lies, alas, a despicable blot
on all the history of the Russian race!

303.

When what we have said is echoed far and wide
by a soul sympathetic to its sense,
we need no other recompense -
we're satisfied, we're satisfied.

304. TO PRINCE SUVOROV

Two disparate tendencies
join in you,
you holy fool who cannot save his soul,
you clown without a scrap of wit.

.....

It seems that Nature's grand design
was creating then condemning you
to deeds you needn't answer for,
to words that go unpunished.

305.

In God's world it can happen
that snow will fall in May,
but Spring doesn't grieve,
knowing her time will come.

.....

Despite its raging,
this untimely fool is powerless.

Blizzards and storms have already abated,
summer storms are on their way.

306.

When our disordered exchequer
doesn't simply thresh around,
but runs itself aground,
just sitting like a crab,
who will come to save her,
well who, if not a sailor?

307.

Lake's still currents,
gold-glinting roofs,
past glories in abundance
in the lake.
Life plays. Sun burns.
Under both, here,
a wonder-wafting past,
wafted by its own enchantment.
Golden sun glints,
lake-currents glimmer.
Here the great past
seems to breathe oblivion,
slumbering sweetly, carefree,
unworried, unalarmed
in wondrous dreams
by the momentary tremor
of swan-voices.

308.

On his funeral pall,
instead of wreaths, we've inscribed some simple words:
"Oh Russia, were it not for yours,
he'd have had no enemies at all".

309.

When our decrepit energies turn traitor,
when, like former tenants,
we let our house to the young,
save us then, good spirit,
from faint-hearted reproaches,
from slander, from animosity
at our changing life,
from feelings of suppressed spite
at the world which is being renewed,
where new guests sit
at the feast prepared for them,
at the bitter, galling awareness
that the current no longer bears our boat,
that there are other vocations,

that others have been called forward,
from everything that
(the more ardently - the deeper)
we have concealed so long,
because more shameful than ageing, aged love
is an old man's peevish passion.

310.

The pale, blue sky
breathes warmth and light
and greets Peter's city
with an unheard of September.

.....

A warm, moist fullness in the air
waters fresh foliage
and quietly ripples
through the stately pennants.

.....

The sun sows glittering heat
along the deeps of the Neva.
Everything gleams and wafts like the south
and life is like a dream.

.....

More free and easy, more welcoming
is the vanishing day,
and the shade of autumn evenings
is heated by summer comfort.

.....

At night, multi-coloured
lights flame...
enchanted nights,
enchanted days.

.....

It's as if nature's strict rules
had been relaxed
in favour of the spirit of life and freedom,
of the inspirations of love.

.....

It's as if, eternally indestructible,
the eternal order had been destroyed
by the loving and loved
human soul.

.....

In this caressing radiance,
in this blue sky
there's a smile, there's an awareness,
there's a sympathetic reception.

.....

And sacred emotion
with the gift of pure tears
has come to us like a revelation
and echoed through everything.

.....

What was unprecedented till now
our knowing people has understood,
and the week of Dagmar

will cross the generations.

311.

Russia is a thing of which
the intellect cannot conceive.
Hers is no common yardstick.
You measure her uniquely:
in Russia you believe!

312. ON THE JUBILEE OF N.M. KARAMZIN

On Karamzin's great day,
at this fraternal funeral feast in his memory,
what should we have to say before the fatherland,
what, that she could respond to?

.....
With what reverent praise,
with what living sympathy
shall we honour this glorious day,
this national, family festival?

.....
What respects shall we send you,
you, our good, pure genius,
amidst the perturbations and doubts
of these much-troubled years

.....
with their ugly mixture
of impotent justice and glaring lies,
so hateful to a soul
which is high, passionate about goodness,

.....
a soul, such as yours was
when it still fought on here,
but which headed irrepressibly
for God's invocatory voice?

.....
We shall say, be a guide to us,
be an inspiring star,
illuminate our fateful dusk,
wholesome, free, wise spirit,

.....
able to bring all together
into an unbreakable, whole structure,
everything humanly good,
reinforcing it with Russian feeling,

.....
able, your neck unbending
before the crown's charms,
to be a friend of the tsar to the end
and a true subject of Russia.

313.

Russian star, will you always seek
mists to stay concealed,

or like an optical illusion
will you forever be revealed?

.....
Will you really be to avid eyes
which seek your glow at night
an empty, mocking meteor
aimlessly scattering its light?

.....
Murk thickens. Grief deepens.
Disaster's slipped its tether.
See whose flag is sinking in the ocean.
Wake up, wake now, or drown forever!

314. IN ROME

An edifice was raised in ancient Rome,
Neron building himself a golden palace.
At the very granite foot of the palace
a blade of grass engaged the caesar in a dispute:
"I'll not give in to you, you know that, earthly ruler,
and I cast aside your hateful burden."
"What, not give in to me? The world groans beneath me!"
"The whole world is your servant, but my servant is Time."

315.

Although it has slipped from the face of the earth
there remains in the souls of tsars a retreat for truth.
Who has not heard the solemn word?
Age passes it on to age.

.....
And what now? Alas, what do we see?
Who will give shelter to, who will look after the divine guest?
Lies, evil lies have corrupted all minds,
and the whole world has become lie incarnate!

.....
Once again the East is smoking with fresh blood,
there's carnage once again, everywhere there's wailing and weeping,
and again the feasting executioner is in the right,
and the victims are given up to slander!
Oh, this age, nurtured on dissension,
soulless age with a malicious intellect,
in the squares, in palaces, on thrones,
everywhere it's become the personal foe of truth!

.....
But there remains one powerful retreat,
one sacred altar left for truth:
in your soul, our Orthodox tsar,
our good-hearted, honourable Russian tsar!

316 .

It's not the first time the East has been in turmoil,
not the first time they've crucified Christ there,
and with their shield the powers protect
the pallid horn of the moon from "the cross".

A cry goes up: "Crucify him, crucify him!
Give them over once more to slavery and to torment!"
Oh Russia, surely you can't hear these sounds
and, like Pilate, wash your hands.
Don't you see, it's your heart that's bleeding!

317.

Above prostrate Russia
there arose in a sudden storm
Peter, nicknamed the Fourth,
Arakcheev the Second.

318.

How I love the cherished pages
of this posthumous album,
how everything about them is so kindred and close,
how full it all is of spiritual warmth!

.....

How the sympathetic strength of these lines
has fanned me with the past!
The temple has emptied, the thurible's fire has gone out,
but the sacrificial smoke still rises.

319.

"The smoke of the fatherland is sweet to smell!"
Thus a former age, poetically, would speak.
But ours forever seeks sunspots as well
and smuts our fatherland with smoke that reeks!

320. SMOKE

Once there stood a mighty, beautiful wood here,
it rustled greenly, this magical forest,
but not really a forest, rather an entire world of variety,
filled with visions and wonders.

.....

Sunlight filtered through, shadows shimmered;
the racket of birds would not be stilled;
swift deer flashed through thickets
and the hunter's horn resounded now and then.

.....

At the cross-roads, chatting and greeting,
meeting us from the silvan half-light,
entranced by a kind of wondrous light,
swarms of familiar faces.

.....

What life, what charm,
what a luxuriant, bright feast for the soul!
Unearthly creations there seemed to be to us,
but this marvellous world was close to us.

.....

And once again to the mysterious forest
we have come in our former love.
But where is it? Who has brought down the curtain,
dropped it from the sky to the earth?

.....
What's this? A spectre, spells of some sort?
Where are we? Can we believe our eyes?
All that's here is smoke, like the fifth element,
smoke, joyless, endless smoke!

.....
Here and there ugly stumps stick through
where the fire's left it bare,

and white flames run across the burned boughs
with an ominous crackling.

.....
No, it's a dream! No, the breeze will spring up
and bear away the spectre of smoke
and once more our wood will be green,
as it was, magic, kindred.

321. TO THE SLAVS

A heartfelt greeting to you, brethren,
from all corners of Slavdom,
greetings to you all, without exception!
A family feast is prepared for you all!
Not for nothing has Russia called you
to a festival of peace and love;
but you must realise, dear guests,
that here you're more than guests - you're family!

.....
You're at home here, and more at home
than in your own native land,
here where the rule of foreign powers is unknown,
here where there is but one tongue
for all of us, rulers and ruled,
and where Slavdom is not held accountable
for the grave original sin.

.....
Although we've been split apart
by inimical fate,
we're still one race,
the scions of a single mother!
That's why they hate us!
You'll not be forgiven for Russia
nor Russia forgiven for you!

.....
They're worried to death
by the fact that the Slavonic family
is telling friend and foe to their faces
for the first time, "Here I am!"
At the memory which will not go away
of a long chain of evil deeds,
Slav self-consciousness,
like divine retribution, will terrify them!

.....
Long ago on European soil,
where falsehood grew so luxuriantly,
long ago with the learning of the Pharisee,
a dual truth was created:
for them - law and justice,
for us - violation and deceit,
and antiquity reinforced
them, as the inheritance of the Slavs.
And that which lasted centuries
has not dried up today,
and weighing down on us,
above us, gathered here ...
Still smarting from old pains
is all our modern times ...
The field of Kosovo has not been touched,
the White Mountain not levelled to the ground!
And among us - no small shame -
in the Slav medium kindred to all,
the only one who's walked away from their disgrace
and has not succumbed to their enmity
is he who for his own kind everywhere and always
has been the foremost miscreant:
they will only honour our Judas
with their kiss.

.....
Shamefully conciliatory tribe,
when will you become a race?
When will your time of differences and adversity
become redundant,
and when will a cry ring out for unity
and bring down that which divides us?
We'll wait and trust in providence
which knows the day and the hour.
And this faith in God's justice
will no longer die in our breasts,
though many sacrifices and much sorrow
will still be met by us on the way ...
It lives - this supreme achiever -
and its judgement is not meagre,
and the word liberator-tsar
will reach out beyond the Russian border.

322. TO THE SLAVS

Man mu? die Slaven an die Mauer drucken.
They shout, they threaten:
"Watch, we'll squeeze the Slavs to the wall!"
Well, let's hope they don't burst apart
during their ardent onslaught!

.....
Yes, there's a wall, all right, but it's a big one
and it's not hard to push you against it.
But what benefit would come from it?
That's what I can't figure out.

.....
That wall is fearfully resilient,

although it's a granite cliff.
One sixth part of the globe
it long ago encompassed.

.....

More than once it's been stormed,
here and there a couple of stones have been broken off,
but after that the warriors
retreated with bruised foreheads.

.....

It stands as it has always stood,
watching, a martial fastness.
It's not so much that it's threatening,
but... every stone in it is alive.

.....

So let the frenzied attempts
of the Germans constrict and press you
to its embrasures and its shutters,
Let's just see what they get hold of!

.....

No matter how blind enmity rages,
no matter how their violence threatens,
this kindred wall will not give you up,
it will not repulse its own people.

.....

It will part before you
and, like a living bulwark for you,
will stand between you and the enemy
and move closer to them.

323. POSTSCRIPT TO THE POEM ENTITLED TO HANKA

Thus I appealed, thus I spoke.
That was thirty years ago.
Efforts are more determined.
Evil is nastier.

.....

You, standing now before God,
man of justice, sacred shade,
let all your life be a guarantee
that the desired day will come.

.....

For all your constancy
in the battle which has still not ended,
let the first All Slav festival
be an offering to you!

324.

It's a waste of time. You'll not make them see sense.
The more liberal they are, the coarser they are.
Civilisation is a fetish to them,
but its idea is inaccessible to them.

.....

However much you grovel to it, gentlemen,
you'll not gain recognition from Europe:
in her eyes you will forever be

not the servants of enlightenment, rather its serfs.

325. ON THE JUBILEE OF PRINCE A.M. GORCHAKOV

In these bloodily fateful days
when, calling a halt to its fighting,
Russia has sheathed her sword,
her sword, pitted in battle,
he was summoned by the will of authority
to stand guard, and he stood,
and he conducted on his own with Europe
a valiant, unequal struggle.

.....

For twelve years now
this obstinate dual has lasted.
The world of foreigners wonders.
Russia alone can understand him.
He it was who first guessed what the problem was,
and he it was who first boldly recognised
the Russian spirit as the union of strength,
and this crown is his just reward.

326.

In these days of madness, if a noble prince sinks
to decorate Christ's torturer with his own hand,
if we recall the saying, perhaps you'll understand:
"Evil be to him who evil thinks".

327.

However burdensome the end,
that thing we'll never comprehend,
our mortal suffering's exhaustion,
more horror in our souls is roused

by watching one by one being doused
our every cherished recollection.

328.

A righteous punishment is being meted out
for a grievous sin, a thousand-year old sin.
There will be no appeal, the blow will not be deflected,
and God's justice will be seen by everyone.

.....

It's the righteous punishment of divine justice
and whoever you might call to for support,
judgement will be passed and the papal tiara
will for the last time be bathed in blood.

.....

And you, its innocent bearer,
let God save you and bring you to your senses.
Pray to Him, that your grey hair
be not dirtied by spilled blood.

**329. ON READING THE IMPERIAL DESPATCHES, PRINTED IN THE JOURNAL
DE ST. PETERSBOURG.**

When expiation is accomplished
and once more dawn illuminates the East,
oh, how they'll then understand the meaning
of these magnificent lines!

.....
How the first bright ray of daybreak,
touching, will bring brilliant flame,
gilding and making sacred
these prophetic pages!

.....
And in an outpouring of national sentiment,
like pure, divine dew,
a tear of gratitude
from free peoples will start to gleam on them!

.....
In them is written a whole story
about what was and what is.
Having unmasked Europe's conscience,
they have saved Russia's honour!

330.

Once more by the Neva I stand.
Once more, as in the past,
as I were alive, I stare
at these sleeping waters.

.....
There's not a spark in the sky's blue.
Everything's stilled in pale enchantment.
Alone along the pensive Neva
currents of moonlight stream.

.....
Am I dreaming all this,
or am I really seeing
what we saw by this very moon
when we were both still alive?

331. FIRES

As far as the eye can see,
horizon-wide,
massive, threatening cloud,
column upon column,
a chasm of smoke hanging over the land.
Dead bushes spreading out,
grasses smouldering, unburning,
a row of charred firs
thinned out on the horizon.
On this sad, scorched site
no sparks, only smoke.
Where's the fire, malicious destroyer,

omnipotent master?
Stealthily here and there,
like some red beast
crawling through the undergrowth,
the living fire runs!
Let twilight come
Smoke and darkness merge.
With consoling flames
the beast illuminates his camp.
Before the might of this elemental enmity,
silent, arms drooping,
stands sad man,
stands a helpless child.

332.

Clouds melt in the sky.
Beaming in the heat,
the river runs, sparkling
like a steel mirror.
.....
It's hotter by the hour.
Shadows retreat to silent oak thickets.

From whitening fields
wafts honey-scent.
.....
What a wondrous day! Centuries will pass
and in the same eternal order
and river will sparkle and flow
and meadows will breathe in the sun.

333. TO MIKHAIL PETROVICH POGODIN

Here's an unsightly list of my verses.
Without glancing at them, I present them to you,
not controlling my sloth enough
to take at least a quick look through them.

.....
In our age verses live a second or two,
born in the morning, dying towards evening.
Why make a fuss? The hand of oblivion
will carry out its editorial task with precision.

334. IN MEMORY OF E.P. KOVALEVSKY

In the ranks of the fatherland's forces
yet another bold warrior's fallen
and yet again all honest, Russian hearts
will sigh at their grievous loss.

.....
This living soul was valiantly
true to himself, always and everywhere,
this living flame, often smoking
as it burned in suffocating milieu.
.....

Unembarrassed, he believed in truth and
all life long he battled the vulgar and the petty.
He fought, not once giving up.
He was a rare man in Russia.

.....
Not only will Russia lament his passing:
he was dear in that alien land,
and where blood flows joylessly
there too will flow tears of recognition.

335.

The well-wishers of the Russian press,
as do all of you, gentlemen,
make her feel sick, but the trouble is
that she doesn't actually throw up.

336. A HEINE MOTIF (HEINE)

If death is night, if life is day,
ah, you mottled day, you've exhausted me!
Shadows thicken above my bed.
Drowsiness attracts my head.

.....
Impotent, I yield to it.
But through the mute murk a dream persists,
somewhere there, above, the clear day's glistening
and an invisible choir sings of love.

337.

You weren't born a Pole,
though you still feel you're one of the szlachta,
and you're Russian, you must be aware,
only in the estimation of the Third Section.

.....
Slave of influential gentlemen,
with what noble valour
your freedom of speech allows you to fulminate
against all those whom you've muzzled!

.....
Not in vain have you served
with your pen the aristocracy.
In which servants' quarters
did you acquire this knightly manner?

338.

"No, I can't see you..."
Thus indeed I spoke
not once but a hundred times,
while you, you wouldn't believe it.

.....
In one thing my informer is wrong,
if he really has decided to inform,

why, interrupting me,
did he not bother finishing what he was saying?

.....
And now he pesters me,
this course, insolent-joker,
putting aside his notion,
to re-establish my literal text.

.....
Yes, I said, and more than once -
it wasn't an isolated incident -
We still can't see you -
without that sympathetically deep,

.....
heartfelt and holy love,
with which - how can one not be aware of this? -
the whole of Russia has become accustomed
to admire its best star?

339.

With which heartfelt, simple greeting
shall we commemorate the holy memory
of the thousandth anniversary
of this great day marking Cyril's death?

.....
What words can we impress upon this day,
if not words uttered by him,
when, bidding farewell to his brother and friends,
he reluctantly abandoned your dust, Rome?

.....
Participating in his work,
over a whole span of ages, across so many generations,
we too furrowed for him,
amidst temptations and doubts.

.....
Like him, we in our turn, not finishing our work,
we too will leave it and, recalling
his sacred words, then we'll call them out:
"Don't betray yourself, great Russia!"

.....
Don't believe foreigners, motherland,
their duplicitous wisdom or their insolent deceits,
and, like blessed Cyril, you too must not reject
your great service to the Slavs.'

340.

It's not given us to foretell
how our words will echo through the ages,
but sympathy is given us
as grace is given us.

341.

There are two powers, two fateful powers.
We spend our lives under their ban.

From cradle to grave our lives are never ours.
They are Death and the Judgement of Man.

.....
You don't resist them, you just kneel
and they don't answer for their deeds.
They show no mercy. They don't heed
our protests. Their verdicts allow no appeal.

.....
Death's a gentleman who does not dissemble.
Unmoved by all considerations, he's of single mind.
He reaps his brethren, struggling or submitting blind
when beneath his scythe as equals they assemble.

.....
Society is different: disharmony and strife
this jealous leader will not tolerate.
He will not cut you honest and straight
but by the roots will rive your life.

.....
And woe to him, alas, twofold woe
to that youthful, energetic pride
which with smiling gaze and decisive stride
into that unequal battle dares to go.

.....
When, fatefully aware of all his rights,
with the blossoming courage which beauty has planted
in him, unflinching, by his task enchanted,
he encounters slander and he fights,

.....
no mask covers his eyes
He'll not be humbled, beaten, pushed.
See, from his brow he's brushed
abuse and menaces: 'Let them criticise!'

.....
Yes, woe to him: the more artless,
the more guilty he'll appear.
Such is the World: it plays the brute
where the guilt's more humanly sincere.

342. MAY 11TH., 1869

The word of the Gospel has now taught us all
in its sacred simplicity,
all of us gathered here once again at this general celebration:
"Standing on its rocky summit,
the City will not conceal itself from the gaze of man."

.....
Let this proclamation not be in vain,
let it be our behest,
and we, fraternally celebrating this great day,
let us place our union on such a summit
so that all may see it, all the fraternal tribes.

343.

Just as the trees

in Peter's plantations
have grown splendidly
in Catherine's valley,
so may the living Russian word,
now sown here,
send down deeper roots and grow.

344. TO O.I. ORLOVA-DAVYDOVA

Here, where destiny's gifts are illuminated by spirit,
justified by philanthropy,
involuntarily man is reconciled with fate,
the soul consciously makes friends with Providence.

345. TO ANDREY NIKOLAEVICH MURAVYOV

There, on the summit of an overhang
an aerial, iridescent temple
goes off into the skies, a wonder to the eyes,
as if soaring to heaven,
where the First-Named Andrey's
cross still shines today,
white against the skies of Kiev,
sacred observer of these places,

.....
reverently leaning
your dwelling against its feet,
you live there, no idle dweller,
at the decline of the working day.
And who without humility could
not revere in you today
the union of life and aspiration
and steadfast firmness in the battle?

.....
Yes, many, many tribulations
have you endured and overcome.
Live, then, not in vain awareness
of your deserts and good deeds,
but for love, for example,
so that people might be convinced by you
of what can be accomplished by effective faith
and the constant structure of thought.

346. IN THE COUNTRY

What's all this desperate yelling,
racket and flapping of wings?
Such bedlam's somewhat out of place.
Who's responsible for such things?
Geese by the river, a flock of ducks,
suddenly frightened, scatter.
Where to? Do they know themselves?
They're like lunatics with their clatter.

.....
What sudden alarm
makes all these voices go at once?

It's not a dog, it's a four-legged devil.
A demon-dog has burst into the farm.
Self-confident to a fault,
this riotous fellow who loves to brag
has totally ruined the regal peace
and chased all the birds for a gag.

.....
As if he'd like to follow them,
just to rub it in,
he shows that he has nerves of steel
as his wings he tries to win.
Why all this movement? Where's the sense?
Such waste of energy cannot be right!
What is it that instils such fear
that it puts the geese and ducks to flight?

.....
Ah, but there's a purpose, to it all, you see:
someone noticed a stagnant creek
and for the sake of progress
swift action was the decree.
So, benevolent Providence
slipped the urchin from his chain
so that the purpose of their wings
they should never forget again.

.....
Though in much that happens today
there doesn't seem much sense,
that very genius of the age
is ready to explain it all away.
Some of you might think he's merely barking,
but there's a higher role that he's fulfilling:
he wants to understand and then release
the logical faculty of ducks and geese.

347.

Nature is a sphinx.
The truer she kills you
with her eternal riddle,
it's more than likely,
for centuries,
the truer she has fooled you.

348.

TO THE CZECHS FROM THE MOSCOW SLAVS

Brethren, to your festivals,
meeting you in your exultation,
Moscow comes to meet you
with reverent hope.

.....
In the midst of ecstatic turmoil,
in the heat of great agitation,
she brings to you a guarantee,
a guarantee of love and union.

.....
Take from her hands

that which once was yours,
that which the old Czech family
bought for itself at such a price,

.....
such a fearful price
that even today the memory
is your best sanctuary,
your life blood.

.....
Take the Cup! Like a star
in the night of fates it has shone to you,
and it has raised your impotence
above the world of man.

.....
Oh, remember what a beloved sign
it was to you,
and that it was in the inextinguishable fire
that it was acquired.

.....
And of this great payment,
the property of great fathers,
for all their hard labours,
for all their sacrifices and sufferings,

.....
you allow yourself to be deprived
by foreign, audacious falsehood,
you allow it, alas, to smear
the honour of your fathers and God's truth!

.....
And are you condemned for long
to bear this heaviest of sentences,
this spiritual captivity,
oh Czech people of one blood?

.....
No, no, not in vain did your forefathers
call down grace upon you,
and it will be given to you to understand
that there is no salvation for you without the Cup.

.....
It alone will finally solve
for you the riddle of your people:
in it there is spiritual freedom
and the crown of union.

.....
Approach this wondrous Cup,
gained by your best blood,
approach, step closer to it
with hope, faith and love.

349.

No matter how we're crushed by separation,
it compels us to succumb.

The heart has another tormentor,
harder to tolerate, more painful still.

.....
The moment of separation has passed.

All we're left with in our hands
is a single cover
that we can only half see through.

.....

We know that underneath this gauze
lies everything which pains our soul.
Like some strange, invisible being
it hides from us, stays silent.

.....

What's the point of such trials?
The soul can't help being confused.
On the wheel of bewilderment
it cannot stop being whirled.

.....

The moment of separation has passed
and we don't dare, when the time is ripe,
touch then pull aside
this cover we find so hateful!

350. TODAY'S EVENT

Pennants on the Dardanelles,
festive cannon thundering.
Skies are clear, bright waters swell.
Tsargrad is exulting

.....

with every reason to rejoice,
for all along enchanted coasts,
the jolly-hearted pasha
has invited guests to merry toasts.

.....

He regales them all most handsomely,
his dear allies from the West.
He'd pawn his whole authority
to give them nothing but the best.

.....

From the very sagest reaches
in their Frankish ships they spill.
Can you blame them, can you really,
when Mohammed foots the bill?

.....

Thunder of cannon, crash of music!
All of Europe's come to berth,
every power in the world
enjoys this carnival of mirth.

.....

See this lively western orgy -
frenzied, shouting, in it pours,
shares the secrets of the harem,
bursting open secret doors.

.....

Against the luscious backdrop
of wondrous mountains and two seas
this Christian princes' congress
with Islam is extremely pleased.

.....

No end to their embraces.

They cannot overdo their praise.
Stars glow in the West,
oh, behold their joyous rays!

.....

All the dearer, brighter yet
one shines bright while they carouse,
the fairy in her coronet,
the daughter born of Rome, his spouse.

.....

Notorious in her theatre
of elegance and ploys,

a second Cleopatra,
royal privilege enjoys.

.....

A joy to all, she means no harm,
appearing in the East,
and every head was bowed to her
the sun has risen from the West!

.....

Only where the shadows wander
through the mountains, through the vales,
far from all this noise and racket,
only where the shadows wander
in the night, from fresh-hewn weals,
slashed by scores of heathen swords,
Christian blood still freely pours.

351. TO A.F. HILFERDING

Your failure's such a glittering success
I cannot wait to offer my congratulations,
and it has brought you yet more honour,
a source of edification to the rest.

.....

The whole world has already heard
precisely how you've served our country
- apart, that is, from native Germans-
across the years with the Russian word.

.....

Ah no, they really know what you've achieved,
in this inimical Slavonic world,
and as I've said, the whole world knows
the credit's yours alone, and this is why they're peeved.

.....

Throughout this whole enormous place
they've met you more than once:
the Balkans, with the Czechs, and on the Danube,
everywhere they've met you face to face.

.....

Without going back on what they said -
- most valiant until this moment -
how can they let you in their secret citadel,
through the walls of their ivory tower tread,

.....

this place the Russian Treasury underwrites

for the sake of these glorious defences,

admit you, you, this brave German garrison,
never having lost a fight?

352. TO YU. F. ABAZA

Harmony has power over souls,
a boundless reach.

All living people love to hear
the notes of its dusky, kindred speech.

.....

Something groans within them, violently heaving,
a spirit-prisoner in chains
pleading for freedom, struggling.
It will be heard. It begs for birth. It strains.

.....

It's not like that when you are singing:
different feelings rise.
In your song there is full freedom,
an end to strife, an end to everything that ties.

.....

Bursting from this prison of pain
it grasps the links which held it, severs, rends.
Wild-willed the soul exults,
its sentence at an end.

.....

This infinitely mighty summons
causes light and dark to roll
apart and from within we hear no music -
we hear your living soul.

353.

I read my rebuke,
which was eloquent and lively.
I said it all so nicely,
I'm satisfied, so I approve.

354.

Thus has providence judged:
the imminent grandeur
of the great Slavonic tsar
shall be proclaimed to the universe
not by almighty thunder's drumming,
but by a mosquito's noisy humming.

355. FROM EGMONT (GOETHE)

Joy and grief in living ecstasy,
thoughts and the heart in eternal agitation,
exulting in the sky, languishing on earth,
passionately exulting.

passionately pining,
life knows bliss in love alone.

356. HUS AT THE STAKE

The pyre has been built. The fateful
flame's about to flare and all is silent,
save for gentle crackles as deep within the pyre
the treacherous fire filters.

.....
Crowding closer, people fanned by darting smoke.
All are here, uneducated folk,
here the oppressed and the oppressor,
violence and falsehood: knights and clergy,

.....
here the treacherous kaiser, here the high assembly
of imperial and spiritual princes,
and he himself, the hierarchy of Rome,
sinful in infallibility.

.....
She's here too, simple old woman,
unforgotten since those times,
crossing herself and sighing,
bringing, like a penny, her kindling to the pyre.

.....
Like a sacrificial offering,
your great and righteous man before us all,
already fanned by fiery brilliance,
praying, voice untrembling,

.....
this sacred teacher of the Czechs
unwavering witness to Christ,
stern exposor of Vatican lies
in all his high simplicity,

.....
betraying neither god nor his own people,
undefeated, battling on
for holy truth and for His freedom,
for everything which Rome called heresy.

.....
In spirit he's in Heaven, in family love
he's here still, among his people,
shining, knowing that it was his blood
which flowed defending the blood of Christ.

.....
Oh country of the Czechs, born of one stock!
Do not renounce his legacy!
Oh, finish off his spiritual feat,
celebrate this union of brothers!

.....
Severing the chains with which that holy fool, that Rome
oppressed you for so long,
on Hus's inextinguishable pyre
melt the final link!

357.

Over ancient, Russian Vilnius
kindred crosses glimmer.
Orthodoxy's peeling bronze
makes all the heavens shudder.

.....
Fearsome deeds forgotten.
Gone the ages of temptation.
Heavenly lilies blossom
across the blight of desolation.

.....
Sacred ways are coming back,
traditions fine of early days.
Only the most recent past
has dropped into the realm of shades,

.....
whence, as in a hazy dream,
before the world's awake,
our very peace of mind
this past still wants to shake,

.....
and as the moon's about to leave the sky,
in that early morning chill,
across the land just waking up
a spectral visitor wanders still.

358. K.B.

I met you and the past
came back to life in my dead heart.
Remembering a golden time,
my heart became so warm.

.....
Just as in late autumn
there are days, the transient hour,
when suddenly spring wafts again
and something stirs within us,

.....
so, winnowed within by the breath
of fullness my soul knew in those years,
with a rapture I thought I'd forgotten,
I stare into your dear face.

.....
As if we'd been apart for ages
I stare at you and think I'm dreaming,
and suddenly sounds unsilenced in me
could be heard within me, but louder!

.....
That was more than reminiscence:
my life began to talk once more,
as did in you that very same charm,
as did in my soul that very same love!

359.

Tired and in one piece, I got here on time,
today I say farewell to the white hat,
but parting with you - that didn't go well.

360. TWO UNITIES

Blood's pouring over the brim of the cup
filled to overflowing by the wrath of God,
and the West is drowning in it.
The blood is spattering you, my friends, my brothers!
Slavonic world, pull closer together!

.....
"Unity", an oracle of our century has said,
"can only be welded by iron and blood."
Well, we'll try welding it with love.
Let's see which lasts the longer.

361.

Submissive to a high command
standing guard over thought,
we haven't been too diligent,
despite the carbine in our hand.

.....
We didn't want the job at all.
We rarely threatened and chose to be
a mere guard of honour
rather than have the warder's key.

362.

Whatever life might have taught us,
still the heart believes in wonders:
there is a strength which never wanes,
there is untainted beauty,

.....
and earthly fading
will not touch unearthly flowers,
and in the midday heat
the dew on them will not dry up,

.....
and this faith will not deceive
whoever lives by it alone.
Not everything which has flowered here will wither.
Not all that has been will pass by!

.....
But the grace of this faith for the few
is accessible only to those
who in life's stern trials,
like you, still loving, were able to suffer,

.....
have been able to cure
others' ailments by their suffering,
who have laid down their soul for their friends
and endured everything to the end.

363.

Yes, you have kept your word:
moving not a cannon, not a rouble,
our native Russian land
once more exercises its rights,

.....

and the sea bequeathed to us,
once more with its free billows,
forgetting the short-lived shame,
kisses its native shore.

.....

Fortunate is he today who gains a victory
not by blood but by the intellect,
happy he who can find in himself
Archimedes's centre of gravity,

.....

who, full of brisk patience,
has combined calculation with valour,
he it is who has stuck to his aspirations,
who has dared at the apt moment.

.....

But is the confrontation over?
And how will your mighty lever
strengthen stubbornness in clever folk
and lack of awareness in fools?

.....

364.

I'm bewildered, and let me say
I find it incredible, most profound:
My daughter, blushing-red and blond,
Wants to become a sister in grey!

365.

Brother, you have been with me so long.
Now you've departed to our common goal,
leaving me where everything is bare,
a solitary figure on a solitary knoll.

.....

Must I wait here long on my own?
Give it a day or a year and I'll vacate
this spot from which I gaze into the evening murk,
not knowing what will be my fate.

.....

Non-being is so simple! Nothing leaves a trace.
With or without me, whom does it concern?
Snows will sweep the steppes. The gloom will be the same
and everything will stay precisely in its place!

.....

You can't count losses. Someone's counted every day.
That vibrant life's already far behind.
Ahead, there's absolutely nothing and I, just as I am,
along the fateful queue pick out my way.

366.

Happy New Year, all the best,
and constant success to you.
That's a greeting from a loving dog,
take it with all my sympathy.

367.

A fool we've known for ages,
the bustling old censor
feeds any old way on our flesh,
God bless him!

368.

I'm half asleep and I can't
work out this combination:
I hear the whistle of runners on the snow
and the chirruping of spring swallows.

369. THE BLACK SEA

Fifteen years have passed since then.
A whole gamut of events has come to pass,
but faith has not deceived us,
and we hear the last rattle
of Sevastopol rumbling.

.....

The last, thunderous shot
suddenly rang out, life-creating.
The last word in the cruel battle
has only now been spoken.
It is the word of the Russian tsar.

.....

And everything which till so recently
had been raised up by blind hostility,
so insolently, so arbitrarily,
has crumpled in on itself
before his authoritative honour

.....

And there you have it: free element,
as our national poet would have said,
you roar as you did in days of yore,
and your blue waves roll on
and you sparkle in proud beauty!

.....

Fifteen years you spent
in forced confinement in the west.
You didn't give in, you didn't complain,
but the hour struck and the violation ended.
It fell like a key to the sea bed.

.....

Once again your importunate billows

call on your kindred Russia,
and into this feud, reasoned out by God,
great Sevastopol awakes
from its enchanted sleep.

.....
And that which you, in days of old,
hid from martial inclemency
in your sympathetic breast
you'll give us back, without casualties -
the immortal Black Sea fleet.

.....
Yes, in the heart of the Russian people
this day will be consecrated,
it is our external freedom,
it will illuminate the grave's shadows
of the St. Peter and Paul vault.

370. THE VATICAN'S ANNIVERSARY

There was a day of judgement and censure,
that fateful, irrevocable day,
when to ensure a long fall,
he stepped onto the highest rung

.....
and, constricted by God's design,
and driven to that height,
with his infallible foot
he stepped into the bottomless emptiness,

.....
when, obeying others' passions,
the plaything and victim of dark forces,
so blasphemously-equably
he proclaimed himself a divinity.

.....
Suddenly a parable was created and appeared
about the new Man-God
and to sacrilegious tutelage
Christ's church was betrayed.

.....
Oh, how much dissension and turmoil
since then has that infallible one caused,
and how beneath the storms of these debates
blasphemy ripens and temptation grows.

.....
In fear seeking God's truth,
suddenly coming to are all these tribes,
and as with the thousand-year old lie
it's finally poisoned for them.

.....
And it is powerless to overcome
this poison, flowing in their veins,
in their most treasured veins,
and will it flow long, and where will it end?

.....
But no, however stubbornly you fight,
falsehood will surrender, the reverie will dissipate,
and the Vatican Dalai-Lama

will not be summoned to be the vicar of Christ.

371.

Of the life that raged here,
of bloody rivers that stained the ground
what's survived whole, what has come down to us?
You can see them now, a couple of mounds.

.....
Two or three oaks have taken root,
spreading wide, bold and fair,
rustling leaves, and they don't care
whose dust, whose memory they uproot.

.....
Ignorant of her past, nature seems.
Alien to her are our spectral years.
We are vaguely aware that we exist
as shadows in her dreams.

.....
Completing life's useless game,
one by one her children
she devours in her peace-making abyss,
welcoming, treating every one the same.

372.

Enemy of narrow negativity,
he always kept up with the age:
as a man he was a Russian,
he was a man before a sage.

373. TO THE MEMORY OF M.K. POLITKOVSKAYA

Elle a ete douce devant la mort.
The meaningful word
has once more been vindicated by you:
in the destruction of everything earthly,
you were meekness and love.

.....
At the very portals of sepulchral gloom,
at the last, there was no lack
of abundant love in your soul,
there was an inexhaustible supply.

.....
And that very loving power
with which, not betraying yourself,
you endured till the end
all life's labour, all the day's malice,

.....
that rejoicing power
of benevolence and love,
not giving way, made a home
for your last hours.

.....
And you, humble and obedient,
defeating all death's fears,

went placidly to meet it,
as if at your father's summons.

.....
Oh, how many souls who loved you,
oh, how many familiar hearts,
hearts, living by your life,
will be stricken by your untimely end!

.....
It was late when I met you
on my path through life,
but with sincere anguish
I say "Farewell" to you.

.....
In these days of desperate doubt,
these days, suffering from lack of faith,
when denser all around the shadows press
onto the ruined earthly world,

.....
oh, if in this fearsome division
in which we're destined to live,
there's still one revelation,
there's an unbroken link

.....
with the great mystery of death,
then this, we see and believe,
is the exit of a soul like you,
their exit from our darkness.

374.

On this day of the Orthodox East,
this sacred, sacred great day,
spread wide across the whole world your peals
and clothe all Russia in them!

.....
But do not limit your summons
to the frontiers of Holy Russia.
Let it be heard throughout the world,
let it overflow its brim,

.....
with its distant wave
embracing that vale
where my own child
fights with wicked sickness,

.....
that bright land, where in exile
fate drew her,
where the breathing of the southern sky
she drinks as she would a medicine.

.....
Oh, cure this ailing girl,
pour joy into her soul,
so that in Christ's resurrection
her whole life would itself be resurrected.

375.

There's peace and harmony between us,
that was clear from the word go
Let's greet each other, then,
making the sign of the cross,
you with me, me with you.

376.

These dates are so illogical!
What a mess this calendar is!
Outside it's winter, as far as I remember,
and yet in fullest bloom,
as charming as only she can be,
I'm greeting spring in late November!

377.

Here's a whole world, living, varied,
of magic sounds and magic dreams!
Oh, this world, so youthfully handsome,
is worth a thousand other worlds!

378.

Saviour, I see your mansion decked out,
but I have no clothes to enter it.

379.

In my grave I'd love to lie
as now upon my bed I lie.
Silently, eternally I'd hear you
as centuries passed by.

.....

The following poems were written during the last six months of Tyutchev's final illness. During this period he suffered a number of strokes.

380. NAPOLEON III

You too have completed your fateful campaign,
duplicitous inheritor of great powers,
man not of the fates but of blind chance.
You're a sphinx whose riddle the coarse crowd solved
but, the irresistible preacher
of God's justice, not of earth's,
you demonstrated to the world indeed
how unsteady everything is if there's none of this truth there:
you spent twenty stormy years
pointlessly agitating the world,
you sowed a lot of lies in the world
and started a lot of tempests,
and you scattered what was left

and wasted what had been built up!
The people who laid the crown upon you
became dissolute thanks to you, and perished:
and, true to your calling,
stirring up the terrified world with your game,
like a stupid child
you gave it over to a long period of instability.
There's no salvation in lies and violence,
however you might boldly arm yourself with them,
not for man's soul nor for his affairs.
Listen while you celebrate, whoever he might now be,
armed to the teeth with violence and deceit,
your turn will come, and sooner or later
you'll be defeated by it!
But in expiation of dark deeds
you bequeathed to the world one great lesson:
let people and lords make sense of it
and each one who would compete with you;
only there, only in that native family,
where a living link with a higher power is sensed
and where it's reinforced
by mutual faith and a free conscience,
where all its conditions are sacred
and the people take heart in it,
whether he stands by the throne
or stands vigil at the head
of the death bed, where the tsar's son lay,
and all the people recently
stood around that bed
in Orthodox prayer.
Oh, there's no place for treason here,
or for various kinds of cunning,
and extremely pitiful would be he
who would insult this people
by either slander or suspicion.

381.

To you, ill in a distant land,
it occurred to me, also suffering and in torment,
to send you this verse,
so that together with the happily splashing sea
it would fly into your window,
a distant echo of your native waters,
and the Russian word, though for only a moment,
would interrupt the singing of the Mediterranean.
From that company, far from foreign,
in which you were the soul and the love,
where today with concentrated attention
they keep an eye on your illness with sincere compassion,
let him be closer than ever before, part of your soul,
that best of men, that purest of souls,
your dear, good, unforgettable husband!
The soul, with which yours was fused,
preserving you from harm's temptations,
with which you spent all your life as one,
fulfilling honourably your difficult task,

that of an exemplary, Christian widow!

.....

Greetings to you from that shade,
dear and blessed to us both,
who spent so little time among us,
suffered bravely and loved hotly,
rushing away from this vale of tears,
where she succeeded in nothing, alas,
in her long, heavy, exhausting struggle,
forgiving people and fate for everything.
And her native land she loved so much,
that, being no warrior,
she still offered her life to her country.
She could not have parted with it in time,
if another life could have saved it.

382.

British leopard,
why get so riled at us?
Why do you wave your tail
and growl so vexedly?
Where's the source of this sudden alarm?
What have we done wrong?
Is it because, having penetrated deep into
the central Asian steppes,
our northern bear,
our all-Russian man of the land
refused to surrender his rights
to defend himself, even biting back?
To show his friends that he means business,
he's not about to let the world
see him as some hermit-fakir.
He's not willing to let the world,
right in public view,
see him offer his body as a meal
to all the snakes and creatures of the steppes.
"No, that's not the way it will be!" -
and he raised his paw.
The leopard was so cross at this:
"Ah, scoundrel! You bounder!"
our lion roared in anger.
"How dare this simple bear defend itself
in my presence, raising its paw,
even snapping at me!
You'll see, it'll come to such a pass
that he'll start to think he has the same rights
as me, the radiant lion.
We cannot tolerate such mischief!"

383.

Of course, it is harmful to the well-being of the state
to form a particular monarchy within it,
but it's not compatible with the needs of the subjects
to awaken in the Khanate an individual Khanate,

to renew the traces and accords of long gone years
and, pushing to one side all today's accords,
set up a new structure
and self-appointed, whimsically,
suddenly in many-throned Moscow
intellectually eclipsed, in God knows what intellectual gloom,
suddenly to declare yourself a revived baskak
of a non-existent Horde.

384.

In days of misfortune and trouble
when from the Golden Horde
baskaks were sent to Moscow,
I'm sure that even they
would choose to despatch to the capital
their more civil Tartars,
as far as these two words can be compatible,
but certainly the best they had at their disposal,
and they wouldn't have sent Durnovo,
though perhaps it's all much ado about nothing.

385.

In punishment, God's taken everything away:
my health, my strength of will, the air, my sleep.
No, you're the only thing he's let me keep,
a guarantee that I'll still pray.

386. SPRING IN ITALY

Fragrant and bright,
even since February spring has been entering gardens,
and here the almond has suddenly come into bloom
and its whiteness has infused all the greenery.

387.

We surrender you to the sun of the south.
It alone, we must admit,
can love you more warmly than our own,
although while here you have a tsar and winters,
we wouldn't swap these places
with any other countries.
Here your heart stays with us.
Go then, leave with God,
but - your heart on it as a token -
say you'll quickly return to us.
And when you leave, from all sides,
even from the wretched bed of suffering,
let prayers and good wishes
hurry after you,
the solemn wishes of all Russian souls.

388.

Here are some fresh blooms for you
in honour of your name day.
I spread more blossoms
and myself, I wither so fast.
I'd love to pick a handful of days,
to weave one more garland with them
for my name-day girl.

389. APRIL 17TH., 1818

In the first dawn of my days,
it was early morning in the Kremlin,
it was in the Chudovoy monastery,
I was in a quiet, modest cell,
the unforgettable Zhukovsky lived there.
I awaited him, and, while waiting,
I heard the moaning of the Kremlin bells.
I paid close heed to the bronze storm
which arose in the cloudless sky,
suddenly replaced by a salvo of cannon.
Everyone shuddered, comprehending this howl.
Festive Moscow burned so
with iridescent blue banners
on this first azure-golden spring day.
Here for the first time
I understood the news
that in the world there was a new dweller
and a new royal guest in the Kremlin.
At that moment you were endowed to the earth.
From that moment this recollection
has been burned into my soul
dearly, like grace.
Over many years that has not changed,
it's accompanied me loyally all my life,
and now, in early morning,
it's as dear to me
and has illuminated my sad sick-bed
and proclaimed a celebration of grace.
I always imagined
that the very hour of this early event
would be a good omen in my life
and I wasn't mistaken: my whole life has passed
under this gentle, beneficent influence.
Good fortune was allotted me
by gracious fate,
and all my age I (above myself)
saw the one constellation,
his constellation, and let it be till the end
my single star,
and many, many times
let it give joy to this day and this world and us.

390. TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY ALEXANDER II

Good-hearted tsar, tsar with an evangelistic soul,
with a sacred love to what is close to you,

favour us, powerful one, by accepting
 this hymn of simple gratitude!
 You, embracing with your love
 not hundreds, but thousands of people,
 have with its wings
 benevolently covered my wretched self today,
 I have not declared myself in any way,
 and can have no claim to the tsar's attention
 other than that of my own suffering!
 You have deigned to look after me
 with your beneficent attention
 and, my spirits having risen, you have calmed me.
 Oh, be a renowned and praised tsar
 but not as a tsar, rather as God's vicar,
 lending your ear not only to the bright legions
 of your chosen ones, your heavenly servants,
 but also to the isolated, cut-off groans
 of beings lost on this earth,
 listening to their worshipful praise.
 What shall we wish for you, tsar?
 Loud celebrations and victories?
 You find no joy in them!
 We'll wish something better,
 like this: in proportion as
 you are summoned by sacred fate
 to act here, in this sad vale of tears,
 that you will be recognised more and more for what you are,
 a friend who does not dissemble, a friend of good.
 This is your just and loyal image,
 this is the best glory and honour for us!

391. INSOMNIA (A MOMENT AT NIGHT)

At night in a deserted town
 there's an anguish-laden time
 when darkness grips streets tight
 and mist reigns in every corner.
 There's quiet calm. The moon has risen
 and the moon's blue-grey glimmer
 picks out a few churches lost in the distance.
 The glint of gilded heads, a sad, dull yawn,
 strikes bleakly at unsleeping eyes.
 Our heart is an orphan-child,
 lamenting and crying,
 despairingly moaning over love and life,
 vainly praying, bemoaning.
 All around is empty murk!
 My pitiful groans last an hour or so
 but, weakening, finally go.

392.

Although he wasn't born a Slav,
 Slavdom's taken him to its heart
 and all his life he's served it honourably.
 He's done a lot, though he's lived little,

and the initiative of much is down to him,
and he has proved, alone and in the field,
that he can be a warrior of valour.

393.

Fate sends days
to wrack and twist my body,
to turn its fearsome fingers in my soul.
Life presses down, a choking nightmare.
Happy am I when on such days
the all-merciful God sends me
the best of priceless gifts,
a friend's sympathetic hand,
a warm, living hand
which, touching me only lightly,
dissipates numbness,
scatters the fearsome nightmare from above
and turns the tables on Fate's cruel blows.
Life lives again, again blood flows
and my heart believes in truth and love.