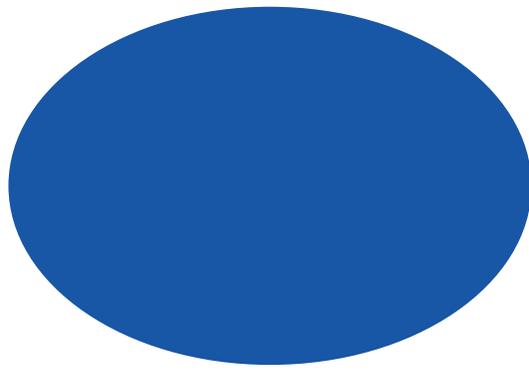


FOUR CENTURIES

Russian Poetry in Translation



6

2013



Four Centuries

Russian Poetry in Translation

fourcenturies@gmx.de

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CONTENTS

Letter from the Publisher 4

XVIII

Nikolai Karamzin Николай Карамзин

Epigrams 5

Эпиграммы 5

Translated by Alex Cigale

Перевод на английски Алекса Сигала

Vasilii Kapnist Василий Капнист

Epigrams 6

Эпиграммы 6

Translated by Alex Cigale

Перевод на английски Алекса Сигала

XX

Максимилијан Волошин Максимилиан Волошин

Два демона 7

Два демона 7

Превод: Мирјана Петровић

Translated into Serbian by Mirjana Petrovic

Осип Манделшам Осип Манделъштам

О небе, небе, ти ще ми се присънваш! 9

О небо, небо, ты мне будешь сниться! 9

В Петрополе прозрачном мы умрём... 9

Във Петербург прозрачен ще умрем 9

На Касандра 10

Кассандре 10

Превод - Мария Липискова

Translated into Bulgarian by Maria Lipiskova

Осип Манделъштам Осип Манделъштам

Несаница. Хомер. Затегнута једра. 11

Бессонница. Гомер. Тугие паруса 11

Превод: Мирјана Петровић

Translated into Serbian by Mirjana Petrovic

Vladislav Khodasevich Владислав Ходасевич

Music 12

Музыка 12

The lady washed her hands so long 13

Леди долго руки мыла... 13

From a window 13

Из окна 13

A Cork 14

Пробочка 14

Step over, jump over... 14

Перешагни, перескачи... 14

I look out from a window and despise 15

Смотрю в окно - и презираю 15

Elegy 15

Элегия 15

Translated by Ian Probstein

Перевод на английский Яна Пробштейна

Elena Shvarts Елена Шварц

Elegies on the Cardinal Points 17

Элегии на стороны света 17

Translated by Ian Probstein

Перевод на английский Яна Пробштейна

Evgeny Turenko Евгений Туренко

An Anonymous Manuscript (a half poem) 22

Безымянная рукопись (полупоэма) 22

Translated by Dana Golin and Alex Cigale

Перевод на английский Даны Голиной и Алекса Сигала

Aleksander Skidan Александр Скидан

SCHOLIA 26

СХОЛИИ 26

wypisz wymaluj amerykański ojciec 27

вылитый американский отец 27

hieroglif oddechu 28

иероглиф дыхания 28

Przełożył Tomasz Pierzchała

Перевод на польский Томаша Пешхалы

Four Centuries Library 30

Letter from the Publisher

Four Centuries Library

Dear Friends,

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

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for reading our magazine.

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

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

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

B. Anthologies of Russian poetry translations

C. Periodicals with translations of Russian poetry

Please, send your donations to:

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

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

Yours,

Publisher

In this issue you will find new donations to the *Four Centuries Library* at page 30.

XVIII

Nikolai Karamzin (1766 - 1826)

Николай Карамзин (1766 - 1826)

Epigrams Эпиграмы

Translated by Alex Cigale*

Inscriptions on a Statue of Cupid

1. On the Head

Where the head labors lonely,
The heart's work departs;
Love, there is not a scrap;
There, love is words only.

2. On the Blindfold

Love is blind to all light
And besides its own bright,
Priceless object rightfully
Sets nothing in its sights.

3. On the Heart

Love is an anatomist: you will find
The heart's place forgetting your mind.

4. On the Foot

When is love without feet? When time arrives
To leave your friend instead you say "Forgive!"

Vasilii Kapnist (1758 - 1823)

ВАСИЛИЙ КАПНИСТ (1758 - 1823)

Epigrams ЭПИГРАМЫ

Translated by Alex Cigale*

* * *

The Creator gave us but one tongue
While blessing us with two ears.
Why so? The reason's quite simple:
That we speak less and listen more.

* * *

To freedom Russia has yet to ascend.
A rule to follow: Don't bend cool glass.

* * *

All praise honestly and say "Be forthright."
You tell the truth, they smack you in the teeth.
What's one to do? Repeat this prayer: "Lord!
Keep me in your regard; please guard my lips."

* * *

Why does old age our earthly cares increase,
And burden us under the yoke of grief and pain?
That we with greater eagerness
Will choose to leave this veil.

Alex Cigale's own English-language poems have appeared in the *Colorado*, *Green Mountains*, *North American*, *Tampa*, and *Literary* reviews, and online in *Asymptote*, *Drunken Boat*, and *McSweeney's*. His translations from the Russian can be found in *Ancora Imparo*, *Cimarron Review*, *Literary Imagination*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *PEN America*, and *Two Lines*. Currently he is an Assistant Professor at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

XX

Максимилијан Волошин (1877 - 1932)

Максимилиан Волошин (1877 - 1932)

Два демона

Превод: Мирјана Петровић*
Translated into Serbian by Mirjana Petrovic*

1.

Ја сам дух механике. У тами твар
Ја чувам у слепој равнотежи,
У половима сфера - небо и земљу сежем,
Геније сам броја. И бројач сам. И владар.

Важне су ми формуле, не речи.
Свугде сам и нигде. Позови ме - и ту сам!
У срцима машине кипте вражјим бесом.
Кнез сам земље! За мене права су и почести!

Слободе сам пријатељ. Стваралац педагог.
Ја сам инжењер, логичар, физичар, теолог.
Привид истине сам слио у лудило складно.

У соку сам конопље. У зргима сам мака.
Онај сам што је хитнуо планетарне кугле
У грандиозни рулет Зодијака.

2.

На дну света у пливача оваплоћен -
Побуњени дух, непокоран вишњој вољи.
Зрак радости у седмобојност бола
У мени се разложио влажношћу бића.

У мени звони свих духова литија,
Ал` седам боја на уделе се дели
У симфонији једној. И да ли
Сјај којим горим сличи оној змији?

У греху сам свет. Смрћу живим. У тамници
- слободан. У немоћи - јак.
Лишен крила лебдим једнак птици.

Кљуцај, орле, јетру! Нек бије крвави ток!
А звездани хор - уједињен у мојој двојници
Као у дуги што је распет блистави зрак.

Mirjana Petrovic-Filipovic, poet, translator and literary scholar, was born in Tallinn in 1976. She has translated poetry and prose of such authors as Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Nabokov, Dragomoschenko, Skidan, Petrova, Sen-Senkov, and others, as well as works of literary criticism. For her poetry collection *"Palimpsest"* (2007) she was awarded the literary prize of the town of Kragujevac as the best first poetry book of the year. She is living in Belgrad.

Осип Манделщам (1891 - 1938)

Осип Мандельштам (1891 - 1938)

Превод - Мария Липискова*

Translated into Bulgarian by Maria Lipiskova*

* * *

О небе, небе, ти ще ми се присънваш!
Не може да бъде, че ти съвсем си ослепяло
и денят е изгорял като бяла страница:
малко дим и малко пепел!

24.11.1911

* * *

Във Петербург прозрачен ще умрем,
където властва Прозерпина.
Тук всеки дъх е смъртоносен
и всеки час равнява се на смъртната година.

Атина грозна, богиня на морето,
сними могъщия си страшен шлем.
Във Петербург прозрачен ще умрем,
където царства Прозерпина.

1916

На Касандра

Не търсех в разцъфващите мигове
устните ти, Касандра, очите ти, Касандра,
но това тържествено бдение през декември,
събуди страшните ми спомени.

През декември, седемнайста,
изгубихме всичко, което обичахме;
един се оказа ограбен по волята на народа,
а друг - сам себе си ограби...

Някога в столицата на даровете
на скитския празник, на брега на Нева,
под звуците на омерзителния бал
ще снемат шала от прекрасната ти глава.

Ако този живот - е необходима безсмислица,
ако гора от кораби - са високите къщи, -
аз бих те обикнал, безръка победо,
и чумо зимна.

На площада с танковете
виждам стои човек -
гони глутницата с горящи главни:
свобода, равенство, закон.

Болна и тиха Касандра,
не мога повече - защо
слънцето изгряващо за Александър
преди сто години светеше за всички?

1917

Maria Lipiskova is a Bulgarian poet, writer and translator, born in 1972 in the city of Teteven, Bulgaria. She has a M.A. (Bulgarian Philology) and MLIS (Library of Information Science and Cultural Policy). Her translations have been published in literary periodicals in Bulgaria and abroad. She has translated Boris Dubin, Mikhail Iampolski, Mikhail Epstein, Joseph Brodsky, Oleg Yuriev, Leonid Shwab, Polina Barskova and Gleb Shulpyakov from Russian into Bulgarian. The publishing house SONM is about to publish her translation of Gleb Shulpyakov's collection of poems *Letters to Yakub*. Her poetry and prose have been translated into English, German, Romanian, and Croatian.

Осип Манделъштам (1891 - 1938)

Осип Манделъштам (1891 - 1938)

Превод: Мирјана Петровић*

Translated into Serbian by Mirjana Petrovic*

* * *

Несаница. Хомер. Затегнута једра.
До средине списка прочитах бродовље:
Тај дуги извод к`о поворке ждраљиње
Над Хеладом негда диго се одреда.

Тај ждралов клин у туђој граници -
На царским главама божанствена пена -
Куд пловите? Да није та Јелена
Шта вам је до Троје, јуначни Ахајци?

И море, и Хомер - све кренуто љубављу.
И кога сад да слушам? И Хомер ми занеми
А море црно свој хвалоспев спреми
И с тешким треском приноси узглављу.

1915

Vladislav Khodasevich (1886 - 1939)

Владислав Ходасевич (1886 - 1939)

Translated by Ian Probstein*

Music

The blizzard raged all night, but the morning is clear.
A Sunday idleness still roams the body,
Annunciation mass at Berezhky
Isn't over yet. I go out to the yard.
How small is all around: a house, a smoke
Which curls above the roof. A frosty vapor
Is silver-pink. Its columns rise above
The house to the very dome of skies,
Like wings of giant angels, while my stout neighbor
Sergey Ivanovich seems suddenly so small.
He has a half fur coat and felt boots on.
Around him is a heap of firewood.
With his both hands he raises a heavy ax
Over his head with effort, yet: tat-tat -
The blows sound smothered: sky, frost, snow
Absorb the sound..."Well, neighbor, happy
Holiday!" "How are you!" I, too, arrange
My firewood. He: tat! I - tat! But soon
I am bored of chopping wood. I straighten up
And tell him: "Wait a minute, isn't that music?"
Sergey Ivanovich stops working, slightly raises
His head, but hears nothing, yet he tries
To listen... Then: "Perhaps it seemed to you,"
He says. "Oh, no. Just listen. It's so clear!"
He bends his ear. "Then perhaps it is
A military funeral? Yet, I can't hear.

But I don't quit: "Well, now it's heard
Quite clearly. The music seems to stream
From somewhere above: a cello, harps,
Perhaps... They play so well. Don't chop."
My poor Sergey Ivanovich stops chopping
Yet again. He hears nothing but doesn't want
To interfere yet tries to conceal annoyance.
It's funny: he stands right in the middle of the yard
Trying not to hinder an unheard symphony.
I finally feel sorry for him. I announce:
"It's over now." Again, we raise our axes:
Tat! Tat! Tat! And yet the sky is high
As was before, and angels in the sky
Are winged shining as before.

1920

* * *

The lady washed her hands so long,
So fiercely the lady rubbed her hands,
This lady could not forget
That bleeding throat.

Lady, lady, like a bird,
You toss in your sleepless bed,
For three hundred years you couldn't sleep -
I am sleepless for six years yet.

From a Window

1

Today is such a funny day:
With all its might a freakish horse
Ran away from the coachmen,
A boy's kite flew away,
A thief picked up a chicken
From Nikolavna, the noseless.

Yet, an arrogant thief was caught,
The kite fell down in a neighbor's yard,
The boy adjusts bast to its tail,
And the horse is drawn back -
Restored to its primal order at last,
Rises my quite hell.

2

I long for someone to be hit
By an automobile gone mad,
And a pale gaper will wet
A curb's dry dust with his blood.

And then it will all start:
A swing, a twist, woe and
The earth will be hit by a star,
And water will become wormwood.

The dreams strangling the soul will be cut
And then all I want will start,
And as an extra candle at dawn
The angels will put the sun out.

A Cork

A cork in the vial of condensed iodine!
How soon have you rotten!
Likewise, a soul unseen
Burns and corrodes the body.

* * *

Step over, jump over,
Fly over - do whatever,
But break through like a pebble from a sling,
A star falling down at night.
You lost it yourself, now find.
God knows, what you are mumbling under your breath,
While looking for keys or pince-nez.

* * *

I look out from a window and despise,
I look into myself with contempt.
Not trusting the skies,
I call thunder on earth.

I see only starless dark
In a broad daylight - thus
Cut with a heavy spade,
A worm would whirl on earth.

Elegy

The trees of the Kronverk garden
Are rustling wildly in the wind.
The soul is craving. It defies
Both consolation and delight.

She gazes with fearless eyes
Deep into her centuries,
Stretching her ample wings,
She flies into a fiery-winged throng.

It is grand and sonorous there,
And each hand hold a harp,
And a spirit to a spirit like a cloud to a cloud
Is thundering in a marvelous tongue.

My outcast soul enters a realm
Of her native ancient home,
To her terrifying brothers with pride
She proclaims her equal right.

She will never need anymore
The one who under a slant rain
Roams through the alleys of the Kronverk garden
In paltry nothingness and disdain.

And neither my poor ear
Nor my humble mind can tell
Which spirit she'll become there
In what paradise or what hell.

Ian Probstein, assistant professor of English in Tour College, New York, a bilingual English-Russian poet and translator of poetry, is writing poetry and on poetry. He published seven books of poetry in Russian, one in English, and more than twenty books and anthologies of poetry in translation. He has translated poetry from English, Spanish, Italian, and Polish into Russian and from Russian into English. A bilingual edition of *Complete Poems and Selected Cantos* of Ezra Pound, which he compiled, edited, commented, and of which he is one of the major translators, was the Best Book of 2003 in Translation and Poetry in Russia. *Collected Poems* of T. S. Eliot in Russian with Dr. Probst's 50-page introduction, 65-page commentaries just came out in Moscow's Astrel Publishing. Mr. Probst is also one of the three translators alongside Andrei Sergeev and Victor Toporov.

Where is the angel, you ask, and I will tell you:
It shines in the heart of the dark - the whole world is maimed.
The angel was twined by the dark, as by a tenacious plant,
Steer to the black point, in the gloom of desolation,
Steer to the dusk, to the dark, to the rocks - to unrest- in the pit
The angel plays hide-and-seek - oh, there he is! Under the feet.
No, he isn't a worm - don't dig the ground in the field.
See - light birds fly to the Pole for the winter.

She looked around and moaned,
And was flying the whole night, stumbling on barbs,
Covering the hospitals, boulevards, plants with her blood.
That's all right! Your death is the bright angel's birth!

II (Southern)

On a Marble Statuette

To Ivan Burikhin

*Lady, have you dropped something?
Oh, never mind. That's just a foot.
Like a tight glove. And ringing,
A shin dissolved like dust.*

Looking at you, I searched for myself:
Past love has gone, like this winter passed,
No future love - just on the mast
A blue fire burns, and the dark roars,
And flocks of palms circle around,
Like birds, carrying my memory away,
Pecking at me, and the dark turns into stone,
The rocks, as if tearing tissue apart,
Fiercely hiss and wheeze near-by,
And life that was a focused point of pain
Sprawls into a circle of oil. Splinters sail.
Tell me, dear, was that I who lived
In the world? Did I sail gliding in azure?
Did I nibble emerald grass with a goose
And we whispered in secret: la-la and la-la?
Eternity lay in a pool, and I drank from it,
But the pool flooded like a sea, the waves strike like knives,

They cut and chop. Oh, life - a long leave-taking!
How God built us - setting diamonds in bony casing,
How God built us - planting cyclamens in snow,
How he burned, quivered, trembled
And made everything tremble, quiver, burn,
Like fire, like blood, falling asunder, flying into the dark,
Where one is torn apart by hungry jaws -
Throw honeycombs of memory away:
You don't have any power over them.
Only love, like Lot's wife, glistens behind,
Hanging over this deadly abyss like a spear.
Tell me, you, diamond magnet, where is the pole of the Universe?
Where is That white, icy, shining Point
To which Nansen and Peary and Scott
Still rush through the darkness their teams of hungry ghosts?
I am heading there as well where a purple bear
Is sleeping covered by ice, and to where
The diamond magnet points. In the skies
Ethereal fire shines and the flock of eyes
Flies southward. Birds are God's crosses!
Many are lost, but He makes up the losses,
And you are numerous again and are driven, you will
Accompany us to the threshold of blue darkness
Where we'll find sledges and the team
Where the road leads through eternal ice -
Through the tundra where we won't lose our way.

III (Eastern)

To E. Feoktistov

Awake - aren't you ashamed to sleep
when the crowd is around, dear?
Awake - the time of resurrection is near.
Crematoria - couldn't have chosen a better place to sleep!
Awake - I'll stand you a bottle of wine.
Oh, God, a reflection in the shop window - is that me?
Am I all incarnated in that poppy seed here?
Well, I'll go to watch cyclamens in crevassed snow
And then will fly away, a bird, slip under the glass.

Each is a bird singing on a branch,
No one listens - so what? He still sings more,
I'll cover myself with golden plumage.
On coffee grounds fortell my fortunes
Because I resemble this dead liquor,
But I feel strong to endure future tortures.
God, I look like that country, Korea,
Step on me, and I'll warm up your heel.
God, peck that seed out from me quicker.
I'll be the salt of your tears and will imbibe them,
Each is a bird - just marvel at him.
A hot flower breathes and sprouts through snow,
A flock of backbones flies to the East,
Wind is the form of an angel, he'll enter unnoticed.
Death will eat up your contour, will shape it sharper,
This bitter liquor is aqua regia,
I command you to fly through azure in full sail,
An angel's form is wind blowing through your temples.

IV (Western)

To N. Guchinskaya

To the West, to the West by the path of the shadows
Howling wind sweeps all to the darkest hollows -
Tattered clothes, rings, faces like bowling balls,
As in the incinerator chute, all are dissolved in the fog.
What am I? I am a vessel of the eternal abyss,
The Mediterranean Sea shimmers in me like a tide,
I'll shut my ears and will hear the roar of a shell,
And the seas evaporate and their hearts will dry.
What will remain on the swiftly drying sand?
I can count it in grief on the fingers of my hand:
Shellfish, slug, verses, a lock,
But the rising sand begins to smack and to suck.
Rising, a human voice reaches the pitch of a bird, of song.
Cry as a seagull, and you will acquire humility.
I am so quiet already - to the point of disgust and despair.
(It was frosty, but flowers bloomed out of horror,

Evgeny Turenko
ЕВГЕНИЙ Туренко

Translated by Dana Golin* and Alex Cigale**

**An Anonymous Manuscript
(a half-poem)**

To E. S.

0.

star in a drop that falls
into the sight of snow
and on this sheet of ice
hardly a footprint - no

marks on the screen that froze
text of our lives stripped bare
and still to prefer those
in whom you can read pain

even tears mock i suppose
those who pretend in vain

1.

on the verge of senselessness in the face of space and time
it will flare out in me or without purpose in answer float
i call by turns with breath with stare with gesture and name
but in response no response nor echo nor notes

no longer ashamed not the least bit of laughter nor vulgarity
nor wretched insults nor self-reproach nor even shame
from Divine possibility the curtailed outcome impossibility
and even that only momentary

*© Dana Golin

**© Alex Cigale

2.
Sluggish water that mills
About with sails and oars
Forever and always still
War is on par with war
Wall-to-wall Greeks pursue
Hel...to collect their loot
Presumably after you...
Furiously and *sehr* good!
Deadly offense of sex
Bulging eyes set on eyes
Pavlovian-like reflex
All to a man vote "Yes!"
Troy will to ashes burn
Pillage and torch and sear
Pity I feel no scorn
How was it you lived here?

3.
Over the sails a trace
Or under the keel ice
Either there is no hell
Or this moonshine lies
Densely and out of sync
This otherworldly slang...
There was no issue till
Schlieman's invented craze
Just pray Ulysses will
Live to see better days

4.
Nothing to scribble home
Earth begins to your right
And to the west and south
The road to you is blind

Only the autumn lost
The echo and sky itself

Sail's single remaining thread
Running the length of fate

On the cusp of immortality
Immediately preceding sunset
A blinding rain begins to fall
Bone-chilling and gray-haired
So there is something to recall
For soldier who will be killed
In this most victorious
And most senseless skirmish

Mingling fate with sweat
The charred rubble of Troy
Narrow-foreheaded youth
Not even yet husband-men
Painting their bodies bold
Markings of heroes and kings
Jerking off swords of death
Fixing Achaean blades

5.
After such great ordeals
Instead of reward and gold
Savory as a meal
Expletive words
As for love - a snow storm
Pieced plots of parceled farms
Hundreds of hectares sown
Your female - your bitch earth
Fornicate all you want
Motherland's yours by birth

6.
There behind the lie
Facing the wall am I
Say just a word my heart
Anything for a start

7.

Powder as fine as salt
Impervious to taste
Pain that cannot be voiced
Of irreconcilable ties
Notice me looking past
Casting a backward glance
Isn't following fate a path
Not trudging a random trail?

Beggar to blind man foe
Russian to Viking knave
Stepping on broken toes
Joints disarticulate
Time and dimension twists
On the edge of the void
No other chance exists -
But your voice.

Evgeny Turenko is one of the editors of the *Anthology of Contemporary Poetry of Ural, 2004-2011*, and a leader of the so-called "School of Tagil". He has been a teacher and mentor to an entire generation of Siberian poets. His poems have appeared, among other journals, in *Znamya*, *Ural*, and *Kreschatik*, and his books of poetry include *Water and Water: Poems 1986-1999* (Ural University, 2000) and more recently a *Selected Writings: A Preface to the Snowfall* (Russian Gulliver, 2011) and *New Poems; A Branch* (Ailuros Publishing, New York, 2013).

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Aleksander Skidan Александр Скидан

Przełożył Tomasz Pierzchała*

Translated into Polish by Tomasz Pierzchała*

SCHOLIA

przesła mostu
koła młyńskie

róg pocztyliona
odcinek metra

<i Goethe Goethe oczywiście!>

nie opierać się
nie spać

silne
męskie objęcia

sentymtalne bzdury

"stul pysk"

starte litery "M" i "K"

*

wypisz wymaluj amerykański ojciec

co oni robią w windzie

oczywiście tylko z dużą poprawką

sì come mostra esperienza e arte

ojcze, ojcze, ja płonę

krtań przekształcona w anomalię

materialne fluidy duszy

paś baranki moje

coś się rozchyła (zresztą na marginesie)

i prawa ich ręka wypełniona ofiarami

około 300 dolarów za uncję

czternaste piętro

wszystko takie same

i wszystko nieuchwytnie inne

*

hieroglif oddechu

wrażliwe środowisko

dwa-trzy cale od pachwiny

uścisnąć - znaczy zrujnować poezję

zabić język by dotknąć życia

widok rozpalonej rzezi

krw tętnicza i żylna

woreczek żółciowy

czas bym padał

stłumiony bunt

kabalistyczna triada

bez ust bez zębów

czas skończyć z arcydziełami

resztę dokończy krzyk

Alexander Skidan, born in 1965, is the author of several books of poetry and essays. He has translated modern American poetry into Russian. He was the laureat of Turgenev Short Fiction Festival in Moscow in 1998 and received Andrej Bely Prize in 2006 for a collection of poetry.

Tomasz Pierzchała, born in 1968, is a Polish translator of English, Russian and Ukrainian. He lives in Świdnica, Poland. Since 2006 he has been translating Russian and Ukrainian contemporary poetry and prose. He collaborates with Russian and Ukrainian artists, poets and writes. He has translated such authors as: Shamshad Abdullaev, Pavel Arsenev, Andrey Sen-Senkov, Anna Glazova, Alexander Skidan, Alexei Tsvetkov jun., Kirill Korchagin, Leonid Tishkov, Dmitry Kuzmin, Kirill Medvedev, Pavel Pepperstein, Sergey Timofeev, Maxim Borodin, Sergey Zhdanov, Tatyana Zamirovskaya etc. For further information visit

<http://tompierzchala.wordpress.com/>

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B. Anthologies.

In German

61. Unser der Tag unser das Wort. Lyrik und Prosa für Gedenk- und Feiertage. Halle (Saale): Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1966, 613 S.

Poems by: Assejew, Bedny, Brjussow, Jewtuschenko, Lugowskoi, Majakowski, Roshdestwenski, Simonov.

63. Nur Sterne des Alls. Zeitgenössische Russische Lyrik. Anthologie. Hrsg. von Feliks Čečík und Annette Julius. Frankfurt: Kirsten Gutke Verlag, 2002, 365 S., ISBN 3-928872-34-6

65. Unvergängliches Abendland. Ein Hausbuch europäischer Dichtung. C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1953, 319 S.

Poems by: Balmont, Lermontow, Puschkin, Wl. Solowjow, Tjutschew

C. Periodicals

In German

62. kürbiskern. Sowjetische Kultur heute. Zum 50. Jahrestag der UdSSR. 1973, Nr. 1

Poems by: Bergholz, Jewtuschenko, Martynow, Meschirow, Simonow, Sluzkij, Smeljakow, Sokolow, Twardowskij, Winokurov, Wosnessenskij

64. neue deutsche literatur, ndl, Heft 2, 1987

Puschkin, A., Ein Denkmal schuf ich mir..., transl. by Hans-Jörg Rother

