Classic Poetry Series

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

- 71 poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (6 June 1799 – 10 February 1837)

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin was a Russian author of the Romantic era who is considered by many to be the greatest Russian poet and the founder of modern Russian literature.

According to Vladimir Nabokov,
"Pushkin's idiom combined all the contemporaneous elements of Russian with all he had learned from Derzhavin, Zhukovsky, Batyushkov, Karamzin, and Krylov; these elements are: 1. The poetical and metaphysical strain that still lived in Church Slavonic forms and locutions; 2. Abundant and natural gallicisms; 3. The everyday colloquialisms of his set; and 4. Stylized popular speech. He made a salad of the famous three styles (low, medium elevation, high) dear to the pseudoclassical archaists, and added to it the ingredients of Russian romanticists with a pinch of parody."

Born into the Russian nobility in Moscow, Pushkin published his first poem at the age of fifteen, and was widely recognized by the literary establishment by the time of his graduation from the Imperial Lyceum in Tsarskoye Selo.

While under the strict surveillance of the Tsar's political police and unable to publish, Pushkin wrote his most famous play, the drama Boris Godunov. His novel in verse, Eugene Onegin, was serialized between 1825 and 1832.

Notoriously touchy about his honour, Pushkin fought a total of twenty-nine duels. At the age of thirty-seven years, however, Alexander Pushkin was fatally wounded in such an encounter with Georges-Charles de Heeckeren d'Anthès. D'Anthès, a French officer serving with the Chevalier Guard Regiment, had been attempting to seduce the poet's wife, Natalya Pushkina. Pushkin's early death is still regarded as a catastrophe for Russian literature.

In 1937, the town of Tsarskoe Selo was renamed Pushkin in his honour. In more recent years, his life has inspired the film Pushkin: The Last Duel.

Life and career

Pushkin's father Sergei Lvovich Pushkin (1767–1848) descended from a distinguished family of the Russian nobility which traced its ancestry back to the 12th century.Pushkin's mother Nadezhda (Nadja) Ossipovna Gannibal (1775–1836) descended through her paternal grandmother from German and Scandinavian nobility. She was the daughter of Ossip Abramovich Gannibal (1744–1807) and his wife Maria Aleksejevna Pushkina (1745–1818). Ossip Abramovich Gannibal's father, Pushkin's great-grandfather, was Abram Petrovich Gannibal (1696–1781), an African page raised by Peter the Great. The only known fact was that he himself

wrote in a letter to Empress Elizabeth, Peter the Great's daughter, that he was from the town of "Lagon." Russian biographers concluded from the beginning that Lagon was in Ethiopia, a country with Christian associations. Vladimir Nabokov, researching Eugene Onegin, cast serious doubt on this Ethiopian origin theory. Dieudonné Gnammankou outlined the strong case in 1995 that "Lagon" was a town located on the southern side of Lake Chad, now located in northern Cameroon. However, there is no conclusive evidence of either theory. After education in France as a military engineer, Abram Gannibal became governor of Reval and eventually Général en Chef (the third most senior army rank) in charge of the building of sea forts and canals in Russia.

Born in Moscow, Pushkin published his first poem at the age of fifteen. By the time he finished as part of the first graduating class of the prestigious Imperial Lyceum in Tsarskoe Selo near Saint Petersburg, the Russian literary scene recognized his talent widely. After finishing school, Pushkin installed himself in the vibrant and raucous intellectual youth culture of the capital, Saint Petersburg. In 1820 he published his first long poem, Ruslan and Lyudmila, amidst much controversy about its subject and style.

Pushkin gradually became committed to social reform and emerged as a spokesman for literary radicals. This angered the government, and led to his transfer from the capital (1820). He went to the Caucasus and to the Crimea, then to Kamenka and Chiþinau, where he became a Freemason. Here he joined the Filiki Eteria, a secret organization whose purpose was to overthrow the Ottoman rule over Greece and establish an independent Greek state. He was inspired by the Greek Revolution and when the war against the Ottoman Turks broke out he kept a diary with the events of the great national uprising. He stayed in Chiþinau until 1823 and wrote there two Romantic poems which brought him wide acclaim, The Captive of the Caucasus and The Fountain of Bakhchisaray. In 1823 Pushkin moved to Odessa, where he again clashed with the government, which sent him into exile at his mother's rural estate in Mikhailovskoe (near Pskov) from 1824 to 1826. However, some of the authorities allowed him to visit Tsar Nicholas I to petition for his release, which he obtained. But some of the insurgents in the Decembrist Uprising (1825) in Saint Petersburg had kept some of his early political poems amongst their papers, and soon Pushkin found himself under the strict control of government censors and unable to travel or publish at will. He had written what became his most famous play, the drama Boris Godunov, while at his mother's estate but could not gain permission to publish it until five years later. The drama's original, uncensored version would not receive a premiere until 2007.

In the year 1831, during the days of Pushkin's growing literary influence, he met one of Russia's other greatest early writers, Nikolai Gogol. After reading Gogol's 1831–1832 volume of short stories Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka, Pushkin would support him critically and later in 1836 after starting his magazine, The Contemporary, would feature some of Gogol's most famous short stories. Later, Pushkin and his wife Natalya Goncharova, whom he married in 1831, became regulars of court society. When the Tsar gave Pushkin the lowest court title, the poet became enraged: he felt this occurred not only so that his wife, who had many admirers—including the Tsar himself—could properly attend court balls, but also to humiliate him. In 1837, falling into greater and greater debt amidst rumors that his wife had started conducting a scandalous affair, Pushkin challenged her alleged lover, his brother in-law Georges d'Anthès, to a duel which left both men injured, Pushkin mortally. He died two days later. His last home is a museum now.

The government feared a political demonstration at his funeral, which it moved to a smaller location and made open only to close relatives and friends. His body was spirited away secretly at midnight and buried on his mother's estate.

Pushkin's descendants

Pushkin had four children from his marriage to Natalya: Maria (b. 1832, touted as a prototype of Anna Karenina), Alexander (b. 1833), Grigory (b.

1835), and Natalya (b. 1836) the last of whom married, morganatically, into the royal house of Nassau to Nikolaus Wilhelm of Nassau and became the Countess of Merenberg. Of Pushkin's children only the lines of Alexander and Natalia continue. Natalia married Prince Nikolaus Wilhelm of Nassau, and their grand-daughter, Nadejda, married into the British royal family (her husband was the uncle of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh).The descendants of the poet now live around the globe: in England, Germany and Belgium.

Literary legacy

Critics consider many of his works masterpieces, such as the poem The Bronze Horseman and the drama The Stone Guest, a tale of the fall of Don Juan. His poetic short drama "Mozart and Salieri" was the inspiration for Peter Shaffer's Amadeus. Pushkin himself preferred his verse novel Eugene Onegin, which he wrote over the course of his life and which, starting a tradition of great Russian novels, follows a few central characters but varies widely in tone and focus. "Onegin" is a work of such complexity that, while only about a hundred pages long, translator Vladimir Nabokov needed two full volumes of material to fully render its meaning in English. Because of this difficulty in translation, Pushkin's verse remains largely unknown to English readers. Even so, Pushkin has profoundly influenced western writers like Henry James.

Pushkin's works also provided fertile ground for Russian composers. Glinka's Ruslan and Lyudmila is the earliest important Pushkin-inspired opera, and a landmark in the tradition of Russian music. Tchaikovsky's operas Eugene Onegin (1879) and The Queen of Spades (1890) became perhaps better known outside of Russia than Pushkin's own works of the same name, while Mussorgsky's monumental Boris Godunov (two versions, 1868-9 and 1871-2) ranks as one of the very finest and most original of Russian operas. Other Russian operas based on Pushkin include Dargomyzhsky's Rusalka and The Stone Guest; Rimsky-Korsakov's Mozart and Salieri, Tale of Tsar Saltan, and The Golden Cockerel; Cui's Prisoner of the Caucasus, Feast in Time of Plague, and The Captain's Daughter; Tchaikovsky's Mazeppa; Rachmaninov's one-act operas Aleko (based on The Gypsies) and The Miserly Knight; Stravinsky's Mavra, and Nápravník's Dubrovsky. This is not to mention ballets and cantatas, as well as innumerable songs set to Pushkin's verse (including even his French-language poems, in Isabelle Aboulker's song cycle “Caprice étrange”). Suppé, Leoncavallo and Malipiero, among non-Russian composers, have based operas on his works.

Romanticism

Although Pushkin is considered the central representative of The Age of Romanticism in Russian literature, he can't be labelled unequivocally as a Romantic: Russian critics have traditionally argued that his works represent a path from neo-Classicism through Romanticism to Realism, while an alternative assessment suggests that "he had an ability to entertain contrarieties which may seem Romantic in origin, but is ultimately subversive of all fixed points of view, all single outlooks, including the Romantic" and that "he is simultaneously Romantic and not Romantic".

Influence on the Russian language

Alexander Pushkin is usually credited with developing Russian literature. Not only is he seen as having originated the highly nuanced level of language which characterizes Russian literature after him, but he is also credited with substantially augmenting the Russian lexicon. Where he found gaps in the Russian vocabulary, he devised calques. His rich vocabulary and highly sensitive style are the foundation for modern Russian literature. His talent set up new records for development of the Russian language and culture. He became the father of Russian literature in the 19th century, marking the highest achievements of 18th century and the beginning of literary process of the 19th century. Alexander Pushkin introduced Russia to all the European literary genres as well as a great number of West European writers. He brought natural speech and foreign influences to create modern poetic Russian. Though his life was brief, he left examples of nearly every literary

genre of his day: lyric poetry, narrative poetry, the novel, the short story, the drama, the critical essay, and even the personal letter. Pushkin's work as a journalist marked the birth of the Russian magazine culture, including him devising and contributing heavily to one of the most influential literary magazines of the 19th century, the Sovremennik (The Contemporary, or Современник). From him derive the folk tales and genre pieces of other authors: Esenin, Leskov and Gorky. His use of Russian language formed the basis of the style of novelists Ivan Turgenev, Ivan Goncharov, and Leo Tolstoy. Pushkin was recognized by Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol, his successor and pupil, the great Russian critic Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky, who produced the fullest and deepest critical study of Pushkin's work, which still retains much of its relevance. Alexander Pushkin became an inseparable part of the literary world of the Russian people. He also exerted a profound influence on other aspects of Russian culture, most notably in opera. Translated into all the major languages, his works are regarded both as expressing most completely Russian national consciousness and as transcending national barriers. Pushkin's intelligence, sharpness of his opinion, his devotion to poetry, realistic thinking and incredible historical and political intuition make him one of the greatest Russian national geniuses.

The Secret Journal

In 1986, a book entitled Secret Journal 1836–1837 was published by a Minneapolis publishing house (M.I.P. Company), claiming to be the decoded content of an encrypted private journal kept by Pushkin. Promoted with few details about its contents, and touted for many years as being 'banned in Russia', it was an erotic novel narrated from Pushkin's perspective. Some mail-order publishers still carry the work under its fictional description. In 2001 it was first published in Moscow by Ladomir Publishing House which created a scandal. In 2006 a bilingual Russian-English edition was published in Russia by Retro Publishing House. Now published in 24 countries. Staged in Paris in 2006. In 2011 new editions were published in France by Belfond and in the USA by M.I.P. Company.

Film

Pushkin's death was portrayed in the 2006 biopic Pushkin: The Last Duel. The film was directed by Natalya Bondarchuk. Pushkin was portrayed onscreen by Sergei Bezrukov.

Honours

The Pushkin Trust was established in 1987 by the Duchess of Abercorn to commemorate the creative legacy and spirit of her ancestor Alexander Pushkin and to release the creativity and imagination of the children of Ireland by providing them with opportunities to communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

A minor planet, 2208 Pushkin, discovered in 1977 by Soviet astronomer Nikolai Stepanovich Chernykh is named after him. A crater on Mercury is also named in his honour.

MS Alexandr Pushkin second ship of the Russian Ivan Franko class (also referred to as "poet" or "writer" class).

Works:

Narrative Poems

1820 – Ruslan i Lyudmila (Руслан и Людмила); English translation: Ruslan and Ludmila
1820–21 – Kavkazskiy plennik (Кавказский пленник); English translation: The Prisoner of the Caucasus
1821 – Gavriiliada (Гавриилиада) ; English translation: The Gabrieliad
1821–22 – Bratya razboyniki (Братья разбойники); English translation: The Robber Brothers
1823 – Bakhchisaraysky fontan (Бахчисарайский фонтан); English

translation: The Fountain of Bakhchisaray
1824 – Tsygany (Цыганы); English translation: The Gypsies
1825 – Graf Nulin (Граф Нулин); English translation: Count Nulin
1829 – Poltava (Полтава); English translation: Poltava
1830 – Domik v Kolomne (Домик в Коломне); English translation: The Little House in Kolomna
1833 – Andjelo (Анджело); English translation: Angelo
1833 – Medny vsadnik (Медный всадник); English translation: The Bronze Horseman

Verse novel

1825–32 – Yevgeny Onegin (Евгений Онегин); English translation: Eugene Onegin

Drama

1825 – Boris Godunov (Борис Годунов); English translation: Boris Godunov
1830 – Malenkie tragedii (Маленькие трагедии); English translation: The Little Tragedies
Kamenny gost (Каменный гость); English translation: The Stone Guest
Motsart i Salyeri (Моцарт и Сальери); English translation: Mozart and Salieri
Skupoy rytsar (Скупой рыцарь); English translations: The Miserly Knight, The Covetous Knight
Pir vo vremya chumy (Пир во время чумы); English translation: A Feast in Time of Plague

Prose

1828 – Arap Petra Velikogo (Арап Петра Великого); English translation: Peter the Great's Negro, unfinished novel
1831 – Povesti pokoynogo Ivana Petrovicha Belkina (Повести покойного Ивана Петровича Белкина); English translation: The Tales of the Late Ivan Petrovich Belkin
Vystrel (Выстрел); English translation: The Shot, short story
Metel (Метель); English translation: The Blizzard, short story
Grobovschik (Гробовщик); English translation: The Undertaker, short story
Stanzionny smotritel (Станционный смотритель); English translation: The Stationmaster, short story
Baryshnya-krestyanka (Барышня-крестьянка); English translation: The Squire's Daughter, short story
1834 – Pikovaya dama (Пиковая дама); English translation: The Queen of Spades, short story
1834 – Kirdzhali (Кирджали); English translation: Kirdzhali, short story
1834 – Istoriya Pugacheva (История Пугачева); English translation: A History of Pugachev, study of the Pugachev's Rebellion
1836 – Kapitanskaya dochka (Капитанская дочка); English translation: The Captain's Daughter, novel
1836 – Puteshestvie v Arzrum (Путешествие в Арзрум); English translation: A Journey to Arzrum, travel sketches
1836 – Roslavlev (Рославлев); English translation: Roslavlev, unfinished novel
1837 – Istoriya sela Goryuhina (История села Горюхина); English translation: The Story of the Village of Goryukhino, unfinished short story
1837 – Yegipetskie nochi (Египетские ночи); English translation: Egyptian Nights, unfinished short story
1841 – Dubrovsky (Дубровский); English translation: Dubrovsky, unfinished novel

Fairy Tales in verse

1830 – Сказка о попе и о работнике его Балде; English translation: The Tale of the Priest and of His Workman Balda
1830 – Сказка о медведихе; English translation: The Tale of the Female

Bear (was not finished)
1831 – Сказка о царе Салтане; English translation: The Tale of Tsar Saltan
1833 – Сказка о рыбаке и рыбке; English translation: The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish
1833 – Сказка о мертвой царевне; English translation: The Tale of the Dead Princess
1834 – Сказка о золотом петушке; English translation: The Tale of the Golden Cockerel

A Little Bird

In alien lands I keep the body
Of ancient native rites and things:
I gladly free a little birdie
At celebration of the spring.

I'm now free for consolation,
And thankful to almighty Lord:
At least, to one of his creations
I've given freedom in this world!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

A Magic Moment I Remember

A magic moment I remember:
I raised my eyes and you were there,
A fleeting vision, the quintessence
Of all that's beautiful and rare
I pray to mute despair and anguish,
To vain the pursuits world esteems,
Long did I hear your soothing accents,
Long did your features haunt my dreams.
Time passed. A rebel storm-blast scattered
The reveries that once were mine
And I forgot your soothing accents,
Your features gracefully divine.
In dark days of enforced retirement
I gazed upon grey skies above
With no ideals to inspire me
No one to cry for, live for, love.
Then came a moment of reinessance,
I looked up - you again are there
A fleeting vision, the quintessence
Of all that's beautiful and rare

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

A Serenade

I watch Inesilla
Thy window beneath,
Deep slumbers the villa
In night's dusky sheath.

Enamoured I linger,
Close mantled, for thee--
With sword and with guitar,
O look once on me!

Art sleeping? Wilt wake thee
Guitar tones so light?
The argus-eyed greybeard
My swift sword shall smite.

The ladder of ropes
Throw me fearlessly now!
Dost falter? Hast thou, Sweet,
Been false to thy vow?

I watch Inesilla
Thy window beneath,
Deep slumbers the villa
In night's dusky sheath!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

A Winter Evening

Sable clouds by tempest driven,
Snowflakes whirling in the gales,
Hark--it sounds like grim wolves howling,
Hark--now like a child it wails!
Creeping through the rustling straw thatch,
Rattling on the mortared walls,
Like some weary wanderer knocking--
On the lowly pane it falls.

Fearsome darkness fills the kitchen,
Drear and lonely our retreat,
Speak a word and break the silence,
Dearest little Mother, sweet!
Has the moaning of the tempest
Closed thine eyelids wearily?
Has the spinning wheel's soft whirring
Hummed a cradle song to thee?

Sweetheart of my youthful Springtime,
Thou true-souled companion dear--
Let us drink! Away with sadness!
Wine will fill our hearts with cheer.
Sing the song how free and careless
Birds live in a distant land--
Sing the song of maids at morning
Meeting by the brook's clear strand!

Sable clouds by tempest driven,
Snowflakes whirling in the gales,
Hark--it sounds like grim wolves howling,
Hark--now like a child it wails!
Sweetheart of my youthful Springtime,
Thou true-souled companion dear,
Let us drink! Away with sadness!
Wine will fill our hearts with cheer!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

A Wish

The days drag on, each moment multiplies
Within my wounded heart the pain and sadness
Of an unhappy love and, dark, gives rise.
To sleepless dreams, the haunting dreams of madness
But I do not complain - instead, I weep;
Tears bring me solace, comforted they leave me.
My spirit, captive held by grief, a deep.
And bitter rapture finds in them, believe me.
Pass, life! Come, empty phantom, onward fly.
And in the silent void of darkness vanish.
Dear it to me my love's unending anguish;
If as I die I love, pray let me die.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Arion

A lot of us were on the bark:
Some framed a sail for windy weather,
The others strongly and together
Moved oars. In silence sunk,
Keeping a rudder, strong and clever,
The skipper drove the heavy skiff;
And I -- with careless belief --
I sang for sailors... . But the stiff
Whirl smashed at once the waters' favor...
All dead -- the captain and his guard! --
But I, the enigmatic bard,
Was thrown to the shore alone.
I sing the former anthems, yet,
And dry my mantle, torn and wet,
In beams of sun under a stone.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Autumn

What doesn't enter then my slumbering mind?
-Derzhavin

I
October has arrived - the woods have tossed
Their final leaves from naked branches;
A breath of autumn chill - the road begins to freeze,
The stream still murmurs as it passes by the mill,
The pond, however's frozen; and my neighbor hastens
to his far-flung fields with all the members of his hunt.
The winter wheat will suffer from this wild fun,
And baying hounds awake the slumbering groves.

II
This is my time: I am not fond of spring;
The tiresome thaw, the stench, the mud - spring sickens me.
The blood ferments, and yearning binds the heart and mind..
With cruel winter I am better satisfied,
I love the snows; when in the moonlight
A sleigh ride swift and carefree with a friend.
Who, warm and rosy 'neath a sable mantle,
Burns, trembles as she clasps your hand.

III
What fun it is, with feet in sharp steel shod,
To skim the mirror of the smooth and solid streams!
And how about the shining stir of winter feasts? . .
But in the end you must admit that naught but snow
For half the year will even bore a bear
Deep in his den. We cannot ride for ages,
In sleighs with youthful nymphs
Or sulk around the stove behind storm windows.

IV
O, summer fair! I would have loved you, too,
Except for heat and dust and gnats and flies.
You kill off all our mental power,
Torment us; and like fields, we suffer from the drought;
To take a drink, refresh ourselves somehow -
We think of nothing else, and long for lady Winter,
And, having bid farewell to her with pancakes and with wine,
We hold a wake to honor her with ice-cream and with ice.

V
The latter days of fall are often cursed,
But as for me, kind reader, she is precious
In all her quiet beauty, mellow glow.
Thus might a child, disfavored in its family,
Draw my regard. To tell you honestly,
Of all the times of year, I cherish her alone.
She's full of worth; and I, a humble lover,
Have found in her peculiar charms.

VI
How can this be explained? I favor her
As you might one day find yourself attracted
To a consumptive maid. Condemned to death,
The poor child languishes without complaint or anger.
A smile plays upon her withering lips;
She cannot sense as yet the gaping maw of death;
A crimson glow still flits across her face.
Today she lives, tomorrow she is gone.

VII
A melancholy time! So charming to the eye!
Your beauty in its parting pleases me -
I love the lavish withering of nature,
The gold and scarlet raiment of the woods,
The crisp wind rustling o'er their threshold,
The sky engulfed by tides of rippled gloom,
The sun's scarce rays, approaching frosts,
And gray-haired winter threatening from afar.

VIII
When autumn comes, I bloom anew;
The Russian frost does wonders for my health;
Anew I fall in love with life's routine:
Betimes I'm soothed by dreams, betimes by hunger caught;
The blood flows free and easy in my heart,
Abrim with passion; once again, I'm happy, young,
I'm full of life - such is my organism
(Excuse me for this awful prosaism)

IX
My horse is brought to me; in open field,
With flying mane, he carries fast his rider,
And with his shining hooves he hammers out a song
Upon the frozen, ringing vale, and crackling ice.
But fleeting day dies out, new fire comes alive
Inside the long-forgotten stove-- it blazes bright,
Then slowly smoulders - as I read before it,
Or nourish long and heartfelt thoughts.

X
And I forget the world - in silence sweet,
I'm sweetly lulled by my imagination,
And poetry awakens deep inside:
My heart is churned with lyric agitation,
It trembles, moans, and strives, as if in sleep,
To pour out in the end a free statement-
And here they come - a ghostly swarm of guests,
My long-lost friends, the fruits of all my dream.

XI

My mind is overcome by dashing thoughts,
And rhymes come running eagerly to meet them,
My hand demands a pen; the pen - a sheet of paper.
Another minute - and my verse will freely flow.
Thus slumbers an immobile ship caught in immobile waters,
But lo! - the sailors rush all of a sudden, crawl
Up top, then down - sails billow, filled with wind;
The massive structure moves, and cuts the waves.

XII
It sails. But whither do we sail?...

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Bound for your distant home

Bound for your distant home
you were leaving alien lands.
In an hour as sad as I've known
I wept over your hands.
My hands were numb and cold,
still trying to restrain
you, whom my hurt told
never to end this pain.

But you snatched your lips away
from our bitterest kiss.
You invoked another place
than the dismal exile of this.
You said, 'When we meet again,
in the shadow of olive-trees,
we shall kiss, in a love without pain,
under cloudless infinities.'

But there, alas, where the sky
shines with blue radiance,
where olive-tree shadows lie
on the waters glittering dance,
your beauty, your suffering,
are lost in eternity.
But the sweet kiss of our meeting .....
I wait for it: you owe it me .....

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Confession

I love you - I love you, e'en as I
Rage at myself for this obsession,
And as I make my shamed confession,
Despairing at your feet I lie.
I know, I know - It ill becomes me,
I am too old, time to be wise ...
But how? ... This love - it overcomes me,
A sickness this in passion's guise.
When you are near I'm filled with sadness,
When far, I yawn, for life's a bore.
I must pour out this love, this madness,
There's nothing that I long for more!
When your shirts rustle, when, my angel,
Your girlish voice I hear, when your
Light step sounds in the parlour - strangely,
I turn confused, perturbed, unsure.
Your frown - and I'm in pain, I languish;
You smile - and joy defeats distress;
My one reward for a day's anguish
Comes when your, pale hand, love, I kiss.
When you sit, bent over your sewing,
Your eyes cast down and fine curls blowing.
About your face, with tenderness
I like childlike watch, my heart o'erflowing
With love, in my gaze a caress.
Shall I my jealousy and yearning
Describe, my bitterness and woe
When by yourself on some bleak morning
Off on a distant walk you go,
Or with another spend the evening
And, with him near, the piano play,
Or for Opochka leave, or, grieving
Weep and in silence, pass the day?
Alina! Pray relent have mercy!
I dare not ask for love - with all
My many sins, both great and small,
I am perhaps of love unworthy!
But if feigned love, if you would
Pretend, you'd easily deceive me,
For happily would I, believe me,
Deceive myself if but I could!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Curious

--What’s new? “I tell you, nothing whatsoever.”
--Don’t fool with me: you’re hiding it, I know.
Oh, don’t you feel ashamed? you think you’re clever
To hide the news from me like from a foe?
Oh, tell me, brother, why? Inform me, I insist!
Don’t be so stubborn, give me just a clue...
“Oh, let me be, the only thing I know is this -
That you’re a fool, but that is nothing new.”

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Day's Rain Is Done

Day's rain is done. The rainy mist of night
Spreads on the sky, leaden apparel wearing,
And through the pine-trees, like a ghost appearing,
The moon comes up with hidden light.
All in my soul drags me to dark surrender.
There, far away, rises the moon in splendour.
There all the air is drunk with evening heat,
There move the waters in a sumptuous heat,
And overhead the azure skies...
It is the hour. From high hills she has gone
To sea-shores flooding in the waves' loud cries;
There, where the holy cliffs arise,
Now she sits melancholy and alone...
Alone... Before her none is weeping, fretting,
None, on his knees, is kissing her, forgetting;
Alone... To no one's lips is she betraying
Her shoulders, her wet lips, her snow-white bosom.

No one is worthy of her heavenly love.
'Tis true?... Alone... You weep... I do not move.

Yet if...

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Demon

In bygone days when life's array -
The sweet song of the nightingale
And maidens' eyes, the rustling woods -
Still left a fresh impression on me,
When loftiness of feeling,
And freedom, glory, love
Artistic inspiration
So deeply stirred my blood,
My times of hope were cast in shade
And pleasure dimmed by longing,
For it was then an evil genius
Began to pay me secret visits.
Our meetings were quite dolorous:
His smile, his glance mysterious,
His venom-filled and caustic sermons
Poured frozen poison in my soul.
With endless slandering remarks
He tempted Providence;
He claimed that beauty's but a dream;
Felt scorn for inspiration;
He had no faith in love or freedom;
He looked on life with ridicule-
And in the whole of nature
He did not wish to praise a single thing.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Don’t Ask Me Why

Don’t ask me why, alone in dismal thought,
In times of mirth, I’m often filled with strife,
And why my weary stare is so distraught,
And why I don’t enjoy the dream of life;

Don’t ask me why my happiness has perished,
Why I don’t love the love that pleased me then,
No longer can I call someone my cherished--
Who once felt love will never love again;

Who once felt bliss, no more will feel its essence,
A moment’s happiness is all that we receive:
From youth, prosperity and joyful pleasantry,
All that is left is apathy and grief...

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Eastern Song

I think that thou wert born for this—
To set the poet's vision burning,
To hold him in a trance of bliss,
And by sweet words to wake his yearning:
To charm him by those eyes that shine,
By that strange Eastern speech of thine,
And by thy feet—those tiny treasures!
Ah! thou wert born for languid pleasures
And glowing hours of bliss divine!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Friendship

What's friendship? The hangover's faction,
The gratis talk of outrage,
Exchange by vanity, inaction,
Or bitter shame of patronage.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Goblins Of The Steppes

Stormy clouds delirious straying,
Showers of whirling snowflakes white,
And the pallid moonbeams waning--
Sad the heavens, sad the night!
Further speeds the sledge, and further,
Loud the sleighbell's melody,
Grewsome, frightful 'tis becoming,
'Mid these snow fields now to be!

Hasten! 'That is useless, Master,
Heavier for my team their load,
And my eyes with snow o'er plastered
Can no longer see the road!
Lost all trace of our direction,
Sir, what now? The goblins draw
Us already round in circles,
Pull the sledge with evil claw!

See! One hops with frantic gesture,
In my face to grin and hiss,
See! It goads the frenzied horses
Onward to the black abyss!
In the darkness, like a paling
One stands forth,--and now I see
Him like walking-fire sparkling--
Then the blackness,--woe is me!'

Stormy clouds delirious straying,
Showers of snowflakes whirling white,
And the pallid moonbeams waning--
Sad the heavens, sad the night!
Sudden halt the weary horses,
Silent too the sleighbells whirr--
Look! What crouches on the ground there?
'Wolf,--or shrub,--I know not, Sir.'

How the wind's brood rage and whimper!
Scenting, blow the triple team;
See! One hops here! Forward Driver!
How his eyes with evil gleam!
Scarce controllable the horses,
How the harness bells resound!
Look! With what a sneering grimace
Now the spirit band surround!

In an endless long procession,
Formless, countless of their kind
Circle us in flying coveys
Like the leaves in Autumn wind.
Now in ghastly silence deathly,
Now with shrilling elfin cry--
Is it some mad dance of bridal,

Or a death march passing by?

Stormy clouds delirious straying
Showers of snowflakes whirling white,
And the pallid moonbeams waning--
Sad the heavens, sad the night!
Cloudward course the evil spirits
In unceasing phantom bands,
And their moaning and bewailing
Grip my heart with icy hands!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

I love Thee

I loved thee; and perchance until this moment
Within my breast is smouldering still the fire!
Yet I would spare thy pain the least renewal,
Nothing shall rouse again the old desire!

I loved thee with a silent desperation--
Now timid, now with jealousy brought low,
I loved devoutly,--with such deep devotion--
Ah may God grant another love thee so!

Another Translation:

I loved you once: perhaps that love has yet
To die down thoroughly within my soul;
But let it not dismay you any longer;
I have no wish to cause you any sorrow.
I loved you wordlessly, without a hope,
By shyness tortured, or by jealousy.
I loved you with such tenderness and candor
And pray God grants you to be loved that way again.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

I Loved You

I loved you, and I probably still do,
And for a while the feeling may remain...
But let my love no longer trouble you,
I do not wish to cause you any pain.
I loved you; and the hopelessness I knew,
The jealousy, the shyness - though in vain -
Made up a love so tender and so true
As may God grant you to be loved again.

Translated by Genia Gurarie, 11/10/95

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Imitation

I saw the Death, and she was seating
By quiet entrance at my own home,
I saw the doors were opened in my tomb,
And there, and there my hope was a-flitting
I'll die, and traces of my past
In days of future will be never sighted,
Look of my eyes will never be delighted
By dear look, in my existence last.

Farewell the somber world, where, precipice above,
My gloomy road was a-streaming,
Where life for me was never cheering,
Where I was loving, having not to love!
The dazzling heavens' azure curtain,
Beloved hills, the brook's enchanting dance,
You, mourn -- the inspiration's chance,
You, peaceful shades of wilderness, uncertain,
And all -- farewell, farewell at once.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Impromtu On Ogareva

Before you, silently I sway.
I feel so anxious when you're near me,
In vain, I cast a glance your way:
I'm sure that I will never say,
What I'm imagining so freely.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

I've Lived To See Desire Vanish

I’ve lived to see desire vanish,
With hope I’ve slowly come to part,
And I am left with only anguish,
The fruit of emptiness at heart.

Under the storms of merciless fate,
My worn and withered garland lies--
In sadness, lonesome, I await:
How far away is my demise?

Thus, conquered by a tardy frost,
Through gale’s whistling and shimmer,
Late, on a naked limb exposed
A lonesome leaf is left to quiver!...

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Lyric written in 1830

What means my name to you?...T'will die
As does the melancholy murmur
Of distant waves or, of a summer,
The forest's hushed nocturnal sigh.

Found on a fading album page,
Dim will it seem and enigmatic,
Like words traced on a tomb, a relic
Of some long dead and vanished age.

What's in my name?...Long since forgot,
Erased by new, tempestuous passion,
of tenderness 'twill leave you not
The lingering and sweet impression.

But in an hour of agony,
Pray, speak it, and recall my image,
And say, "He still remembers me,
His heart alone still pays me homage."

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

May 26, 1828

Gift haphazard, unavailing,
Life, why were thou given me?
Why art thou to death unfailing
Sentenced by dark destiny?

Who in harsh despotic fashion
Once from Nothing called me out,
Filled my soul with burning passion
Vexed and shook my mind with doubt?

I can see no goal before me;
Empty heart and idle mind.
Life monotonously o'er me
Roars, and leaves a wound behind.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Morpheus

Oh, Morpheus, give me joy till morning
For my forever painful love:
Just blow out candles' burning
And let my dreams in blessing move.
Let from my soul disappear
The separation's sharp rebuke!
And let me see that dear look,
And let me hear voice that dear.
And when will vanish dark of night
And you will free my eyes at leaving,
Oh, if my heart would have a right
To lose its love till dark of evening!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Muse

In my youth's years, she loved me, I am sure.
The flute of seven pipes she gave in my tenure
And harked to me with smile -- without speed,
Along the ringing holes of the reed,
I got to play with my non-artful fingers
The peaceful songs of Phrygian village singers,
And the important hymns, that gods to mortals bade.
>From morn till night in oaks' silent shade
I diligently harked to the mysterious virgin;
Rewarding me, by chance, for any good decision,
And taking locks aside of the enchanting face,
She sometimes took from me the flute, such commonplace.
The reed became alive in consecrated breathing
And filled the heart with holiness unceasing.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Night

My voice, to which love lends a tenderness and yearing,
Disturbs night's dreamy calm ... Pale at my bedside burning,
A taper wastes away ... From out my heart there surge
Stift verses, streams of love, that hum and sing and merge.
And, full of you, rush on, with passion overflowing.
I seem to see your eyes that, in the darkness glowing,
Meet mine ... I see your smile ... You speak to me alone:
My friend, my dearest friend ... I'm your's ... your own.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Night Piece

I can't sleep, and there's no light,
Mirk all round and restless slumber,
Tickings near me without number,
Monotonous clock measuring night!

O you Fates with old wives' chatter,
Sleepy night so softly swaying,
Life with mouselike pitter-patter,
Why vex me, what are you saying?

Boring whispers what implying?
Do you murmur or complain?
Can't you tell me what you're seeking,
Calling me or Prophesying?
Oh for someone to explain
That dark language you are speaking!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Old Man

I’m not that lover, filled with passion, -
That youth, who left the world amazed:
Alas, my spring and summer passed now,
And didn’t leave a single trace.
Cupid, the god of youth and love and virtue!
I used to be your steadfast servant;
Oh, if I could be reborn, - I’d serve you
Even more passionate and fervent!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

On Count Voronstov

One half Milord, one half in trade,
One half a sage, one half a dunce,
One half a crook, but here for once
There's every hope he'll make the grade.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Remembrance

When the loud day for men who sow and reap
Grows still, and on the silence of the town
The unsubstantial veils of night and sleep,
The meed of the day's labour, settle down,
Then for me in the stillness of the night
The wasting, watchful hours drag on their course,
And in the idle darkness comes the bite
Of all the burning serpents of remorse;
Dreams seethe; and fretful infelicities
Are swarming in my over-burdened soul,
And Memory before my wakeful eyes
With noiseless hand unwinds her lengthy scroll.
Then, as with loathing I peruse the years,
I tremble, and I curse my natal day,
Wail bitterly, and bitterly shed tears,
But cannot wash the woeful script away.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

She

“Confess to me, what’s wrong. You’re in dejection.”
- I love, my friend! - “Which lady holds you captive?”
- She does. - “Glisera? Chloe? Lila’s so attractive!”
- O, no! - “To whom do you submit your soul’s affection?”
- To her! - “You’re humble! Why all this remorse?
Why do you seem so sorrowful and grim?
And who’s to blame? Her fiancé, her dad, of course...”
- It isn’t that! - “Then what?” - For her, I can’t be him.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Solitude

He's blessed, who lives in peace, that's distant
From the ignorant fobs with calls,
Who can provide his every instance
With dreams, or labors, or recalls;
To whom the fate sends friends in score,
Who hides himself by Savior's back
From bashful fools, which lull and bore,
And from the impudent ones, which wake.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Tatiana's Letter

FROM 'EUGENE ONIEGIN'

I write to you . . . when that is said
What more is left for me to say ?
Now you are free (I know too well)
To heap contempt upon my head.
Yet if some sparks of pity dwell
Within your breast you'll surely not
Abandon me to my hard lot.
When first I saw you I desired
To hold my peace : my shame ('tis true)
Would ne'er have been revealed to you
Had life's conditions but inspired
One gleam of hope that you would come
To see us in our country home
From time to time, so that I might
Hear but one word, catch but one tone,
And live by dreaming on alone
Till our next meeting, day and night.
But then it seemed there was no hope;
Our rustic quiet bored you so,
Folk said you were a misanthrope;
And we—we do not make a show—
You found us narrow in our scope.

Why did you come to visit us
I n this forgotten quiet place ?
I need not have been tortured thus
If I had never seen your face.
My inexperienced heart maybe
Had grown resigned to this dull life,
And future years had brought to me
Some other love—my destiny
An honoured mother and true wife.
Another's! Nay, to none on earth
Could I have given this heart of mine.
By the decree of the Most High,
And by Heaven's willing, I am thine.

Allotted unto you was I
E'en from the moment of my birth
And loyal to my future fate;
And God, I know, sent you to be
My champion and my advocate
Till the grave closes over me. . . .

Oft in my dreams you did appear;
I loved you then before the days
When palpably I saw you here ;
I languished in your wondrous gaze
And in my heart your voice rang clear
Long since. ... It was no dream to me!

You came—at once I understood
This swift confusion in my blood,
While my thoughts whispered : ' Lo, 'tis he.'
Was it not true ? Am I not sure
You spoke with me in hours of peace
When I went visiting my poor,
Or when I strove by prayer to ease
The pain in which my spirit toss'd ?

Was not your image wont to rise
A vision sweet—too quickly lost—
To light my gloom ? Did not mine eyes
See you bend gently o'er my bed ?
Were not some words low whispered
Of love and hope ? Now in what guise
Come you ? As guardian angel good,
Or tempter in some wily mood ?
0 speak, and set my doubts at rest!
What if all this should prove at best
The empty dream, more light than froth,
Of a heart simple and untried ?
Well, be it so! But from henceforth
I must to you my fate confide.
Must weep my tears about your feet
And for your sheltering love entreat.
Picture me now. ... I sit alone
With none to heed or guess what ails . . .
And now my very reason fails!
I wait for you. One glance of yours
Fresh hope unto my heart restores;
Or else the cruel dream comes back
Of merited contempt. . . . Alack!

[She seals the letter.]

'Tis done! I scarce dare read it through,
But overcome with shame and fright
I trust my honour now to you,
And dare to think I trust aright.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Tempest

You saw perched on a cliff a maid,
Her raiment white above the breakers,
When the mad sea reared up and played
Its whips of spray on coastal acres
And now and then the lightnings flush,
And purple gleams upon her hover,
And fluttering up in swirling rush,
The wind rides in her airy cover?
Fair is the sea in gales arrayed,
The heavens drained of blue and flashing,
But fairer on her cliff the maid
Than storms and skies and breakers crashing.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Bakchesarian Fountain

A TALE OF THE TAURIDE.
Mute sat Giray, with downcast eye,
As though some spell in sorrow bound him,
His slavish courtiers thronging nigh,
In sad expectance stood around him.
The lips of all had silence sealed,
Whilst, bent on him, each look observant,
Saw grief's deep trace and passion fervent
Upon his gloomy brow revealed.
But the proud Khan his dark eye raising,
And on the courtiers fiercely gazing,
Gave signal to them to begone!
The chief, unwitnessed and alone,
Now yields him to his bosom's smart,
Deeper upon his brow severe
Is traced the anguish of his heart;
As full fraught clouds on mirrors clear
Reflected terrible appear!

What fills that haughty soul with pain?
What thoughts such madd'ning tumults cause?
With Russia plots he war again?
Would he to Poland dictate laws?
Say, is the sword of vengeance glancing?
Does bold revolt claim nature's right?
Do realms oppressed alarm excite?
Or sabres of fierce foes advancing?
Ah no! no more his proud steed prancing
Beneath him guides the Khan to war,-
Such thoughts his mind has banished far.

Has treason scaled the harem's wall,
Whose height might treason's self appal,
And slavery's daughter fled his power,
To yield her to the daring Giaour?

No! pining in his harem sadly,
No wife of his would act so madly;
To wish or think they scarcely dare;
By wretches, cold and heartless, guarded,
Hope from each breast so long discarded;
Treason could never enter there.
Their beauties unto none revealed,
They bloom within the harem's towers,
As in a hot-house bloom the flowers
Which erst perfumed Arabia's field.
To them the days in sameness dreary,
And months and years pass slow away,
In solitude, of life grown weary,

Well pleased they see their charms decay.
Each day, alas! the past resembling,
Time loiters through their halls and bowers;
In idleness, and fear, and trembling,
The captives pass their joyless hours.
The youngest seek, indeed, reprieve
Their hearts in striving to deceive
Into oblivion of distress,
By vain amusements, gorgeous dress,
Or by the noise of living streams,
In soft translucency meand'ring,
To lose their thoughts in fancy's dreams,
Through shady groves together wand'ring.
But the vile eunuch too is there,
In his base duty ever zealous,
Escape is hopeless to the fair
From ear so keen and eye so jealous.
He ruled the harem, order reigned
Eternal there; the trusted treasure
He watched with loyalty unfeigned,
His only law his chieftain's pleasure,
Which as the Koran he maintained.
His soul love's gentle flame derides,
And like a statue he abides
Hatred, contempt, reproaches, jests,
Nor prayers relax his temper rigid,
Nor timid sighs from tender breasts,
To all alike the wretch is frigid.
He knows how woman's sighs can melt,
Freeman and bondman he had felt
Her art in days when he was younger;
Her silent tear, her suppliant look,
Which once his heart confiding shook,
Now move not,-he believes no longer!

When, to relieve the noontide heat,
The captives go their limbs to lave,
And in sequestered, cool retreat
Yield all their beauties to the wave,
No stranger eye their charms may greet,
But their strict guard is ever nigh,
Viewing with unimpassioned eye
These beauteous daughters of delight;
He constant, even in gloom of night,
Through the still harem cautious stealing,
Silent, o'er carpet-covered floors,
And gliding through half-opened doors,
From couch to couch his pathway feeling,
With envious and unwearied care
Watching the unsuspecting fair;
And whilst in sleep unguarded lying,

Their slightest movement, breathing, sighing,
He catches with devouring ear.
O! curst that moment inauspicious
Should some loved name in dreams be sighed,
Or youth her unpermitted wishes
To friendship venture to confide.

-

What pang is Giray's bosom tearing?
Extinguished is his loved chubouk, 1
Whilst or to move or breathe scarce daring,
The eunuch watches every look;
Quick as the chief, approaching near him,
Beckons, the door is open thrown,
And Giray wanders through his harem
Where joy to him no more is known.
Near to a fountain's lucid waters
Captivity's unhappy daughters
The Khan await, in fair array,
Around on silken carpets crowded,
Viewing, beneath a heaven unclouded,
With childish joy the fishes play
And o'er the marble cleave their way,
Whose golden scales are brightly glancing,
And on the mimic billows dancing.
Now female slaves in rich attire
Serve sherbet to the beauteous fair,
Whilst plaintive strains from viewless choir
Float sudden on the ambient air.

TARTAR SONG.

I.

Heaven visits man with days of sadness,
Embitters oft his nights with tears;
Blest is the Fakir who with gladness
Views Mecca in declining years.

II.

Blest he who sees pale Death await him
On Danube's ever glorious shore;
The girls of Paradise shall greet him,
And sorrows ne'er afflict him more.

III.

But he more blest, O beauteous Zarem!
Who quits the world and all its woes,
To clasp thy charms within the harem,
Thou lovelier than the unplucked rose!

They sing, but-where, alas! is Zarem,
Love's star, the glory of the harem?
Pallid and sad no praise she hears,
Deaf to all sounds of joy her ears,
Downcast with grief, her youthful form
Yields like the palm tree to the storm,
Fair Zarem's dreams of bliss are o'er,
Her loved Giray loves her no more!

He leaves thee! yet whose charms divine
Can equal, fair Grusinian! thine?
Shading thy brow, thy raven hair
Its lily fairness makes more fair;
Thine eyes of love appear more bright
Than noonday's beam, more dark than night;
Whose voice like thine can breathe of blisses,
Filling the heart with soft desire?
Like thine, ah! whose inflaming kisses
Can kindle passion's wildest fire?

Who that has felt thy twining arms
Could quit them for another's charms?
Yet cold, and passionless, and cruel,
Giray can thy vast love despise,
Passing the lonesome night in sighs
Heaved for another; fiercer fuel
Burns in his heart since the fair Pole
Is placed within the chief's control.

The young Maria recent war
Had borne in conquest from afar;
Not long her love-enkindling eyes
Had gazed upon these foreign skies;
Her aged father's boast and pride,
She bloomed in beauty by his side;
Each wish was granted ere expressed.
She to his heart the object dearest,
His sole desire to see her blessed;
As when the skies from clouds are clearest,
Still from her youthful heart to chase
Her childish sorrows his endeavour,
Hoping in after life that never

Her woman's duties might efface
Remembrance of her earlier hours,
But oft that fancy would retrace
Life's blissful spring-time decked in flowers.
Her form a thousand charms unfolded,
Her face by beauty's self was moulded,
Her dark blue eyes were full of fire,-
All nature's stores on her were lavished;
The magic harp with soft desire,
When touched by her, the senses ravished.
Warriors and knights had sought in vain
Maria's virgin heart to move,
And many a youth in secret pain
Pined for her in despairing love.
But love she knew not, in her breast
Tranquil it had not yet intruded,
Her days in mirth, her nights in rest,
In her paternal halls secluded,
Passed heedless, peace her bosom's guest.

That time is past! The Tartar's force
Rushed like a torrent o'er her nation,-
Rages less fierce the conflagration
Devouring harvests in its course,-
Poland it swept with devastation,
Involving all in equal fate,
The villages, once mirthful, vanished,
From their red ruins joy was banished,
The gorgeous palace desolate!
Maria is the victor's prize;-
Within the palace chapel laid,
Slumb'ring among th'illustrious dead,
In recent tomb her father lies;
His ancestors repose around,
Long freed from life and its alarms;
With coronets and princely arms
Bedecked their monuments abound!
A base successor now holds sway,-
Maria's natal halls his hand
Tyrannic rules, and strikes dismay
And wo throughout the ravaged land.

Alas! the Princess sorrow's chalice
Is fated to the dregs to drain,
Immured in Bakchesaria's palace
She sighs for liberty in vain;
The Khan observes the maiden's pain,
His heart is at her grief afflicted,
His bosom strange emotions fill,
And least of all Maria's will

Is by the harem's laws restricted.
The hateful guard, of all the dread,
Learns silent to respect and fear her,
His eye ne'er violates her bed,
Nor day nor night he ventures near her;
To her he dares not speak rebuke,
Nor on her cast suspecting look.
Her bath she sought by none attended,
Except her chosen female slave,
The Khan to her such freedom gave;
But rarely he himself offended
By visits, the desponding fair,
Remotely lodged, none else intruded;
It seemed as though some jewel rare,
Something unearthly were secluded,
And careful kept untroubled there.

Within her chamber thus secure,
By virtue guarded, chaste and pure,
The lamp of faith, incessant burning,
The VIRGIN'S image blest illumed,
The comfort of the spirit mourning
And trust of those to sorrow doomed.
The holy symbol's face reflected
The rays of hope in splendour bright,
And the rapt soul by faith directed
To regions of eternal light.
Maria, near the VIRGIN kneeling,
In silence gave her anguish way,
Unnoticed by the crowd unfeeling,
And whilst the rest, or sad or gay,
Wasted in idleness the day,
The sacred image still concealing,
Before it pouring forth her prayer,
She watched with ever jealous care;
Even as our hearts to error given,
Yet lighted by a spark from heaven,
Howe'er from virtue's paths we swerve,
One holy feeling still preserve.

-

Now night invests with black apparel
Luxurious Tauride's verdant fields,
Whilst her sweet notes from groves of laurel
The plaintive Philomela yields.
But soon night's glorious queen, advancing
Through cloudless skies to the stars' song,
Scatters the hills and dales along,
The lustre of her rays entrancing.

In Bakchesaria's streets roamed free
The Tartars' wives in garb befitting,
They like unprisoned shades were flitting
From house to house their friends to see,
And while the evening hours away
In harmless sports or converse gay.
The inmates of the harem slept;-
Still was the palace, night impending
O'er all her silent empire kept;
The eunuch guard, no more offending
The fair ones by his presence, now
Slumbered, but fear his soul attending
Troubled his rest and knit his brow;
Suspicion kept his fancy waking,
And on his mind incessant preyed,
The air the slightest murmur breaking
Assailed his ear with sounds of dread.
Now, by some noise deceitful cheated,
Starts from his sleep the timid slave,
Listens to hear the noise repeated,
But all is silent as the grave,
Save where the fountains softly sounding
Break from their marble prisons free,
Or night's sweet birds the scene surrounding
Pour forth their notes of melody:
Long does he hearken to the strain,
Then sinks fatigued in sleep again.

Luxurious East! how soft thy nights,
What magic through the soul they pour!
How fruitful they of fond delights
To those who Mahomet adore!
What splendour in each house is found,
Each garden seems enchanted ground;
Within the harem's precincts quiet
Beneath fair Luna's placid ray,
When angry feelings cease to riot
There love inspires with softer sway!

-

The women sleep;-but one is there
Who sleeps not; goaded by despair
Her couch she quits with dread intent,
On awful errand is she bent;
Breathless she through the door swift flying
Passes unseen; her timid feet
Scarce touch the floor, she glides so fleet.
In doubtful slumber restless lying
The eunuch thwarts the fair one's path,

Ah! who can speak his bosom's wrath?
False is the quiet sleep would throw
Around that gray and care-worn brow;
She like a spirit vanished by
Viewless, unheard as her own sigh!

-

The door she reaches, trembling opes,
Enters, and looks around with awe,
What sorrows, anguish, terrors, hopes,
Rushed through her heart at what she saw!
The image of the sacred maid,
The Christian's matron, reigning there,
And cross attracted first the fair,
By the dim lamp-light scarce displayed!
Oh! Grusinka, of earlier days
The vision burst upon thy soul,
The tongue long silent uttered praise,
The heart throbs high, but sin's control
Cannot escape, 'tis passion, passion sways!

The Princess in a maid's repose
Slumbered, her cheek, tinged like the rose,
By feverish thought, in beauty blooms,
And the fresh tear that stains her face
A smile of tenderness illumes.
Thus cheers the moon fair Flora's race,
When by the rain opprest they lie
The charm and grief of every eye!
It seemed as though an angel slept
From heaven descended, who, distressed,
Vented the feelings of his breast,
And for the harem's inmates wept!
Alas! poor Zarem, wretched fair,
By anguish urged to mere despair,
On bended knee, in tone subdued
And melting strain, for pity sued.

'Oh! spurn not such a suppliant's prayer!'
Her tones so sad, her sighs so deep,
Startled the Princess in her sleep;
Wond'ring, she views with dread before her
The stranger beauty, frighted hears
For mercy her soft voice implore her,
Raises her up with trembling hand,
And makes of her the quick demand,
'Who speaks? in night's still hour alone,
Wherefore art here?' 'A wretched one,

To thee I come,' the fair replied,
'A suitor not to be denied;
Hope, hope alone my soul sustains;
Long have I happiness enjoyed,
And lived from sorrow free and care,
But now, alas! a prey to pains
And terrors, Princess hear my prayer,
Oh! listen, or I am destroyed!

Not here beheld I first the light,
Far hence my native land, but yet
Alas! I never can forget
Objects once precious to my sight;
Well I remember towering mountains,
Snow-ridged, replete with boiling fountains,
Woods pervious scarce to wolf or deer,
Nor faith, nor manners such as here;
But, by what cruel fate o'ercome,
How I was snatched, or when, from home
I know not,-well the heaving ocean
Do I remember, and its roar,
But, ah! my heart such wild commotion
As shakes it now ne'er felt before.
I in the harem's quiet bloomed,
Tranquil myself, waiting, alas!
With willing heart what love had doomed;
Its secret wishes came to pass:
Giray his peaceful harem sought,
For feats of war no longer burned,
Nor, pleased, upon its horrors thought,
To these fair scenes again returned.

'Before the Khan with bosoms beating
We stood, timid my eyes I raised,
When suddenly our glances meeting,
I drank in rapture as I gazed;
He called me to him,-from that hour
We lived in bliss beyond the power
Of evil thought or wicked word,
The tongue of calumny unheard,
Suspicion, doubt, or jealous fear,
Of weariness alike unknown,
Princess, thou comest a captive here,
And all my joys are overthrown,
Giray with sinful passion burns,
His soul possessed of thee alone,
My tears and sighs the traitor spurns;
No more his former thoughts, nor feeling
For me now cherishes Giray,
Scarce his disgust, alas! concealing,

He from my presence hastes away.
Princess, I know the fault not thine
That Giray loves thee, oh! then hear
A suppliant wretch, nor spurn her prayer!

Throughout the harem none but thou
Could rival beauties such as mine
Nor make him violate his vow;
Yet, Princess! in thy bosom cold
The heart to mine left thus forlorn,
The love I feel cannot be told,
For passion, Princess, was I born.
Yield me Giray then; with these tresses
Oft have his wandering fingers played,
My lips still glow with his caresses,
Snatched as he sighed, and swore, and prayed,
Oaths broken now so often plighted!
Hearts mingled once now disunited!
His treason I cannot survive;
Thou seest I weep, I bend my knee,
Ah! if to pity thou'rt alive,
My former love restore to me.
Reply not! thee I do not blame,
Thy beauties have bewitched Giray,
Blinded his heart to love and fame,
Then yield him up to me, I pray,
Or by contempt, repulse, or grief,
Turn from thy love th'ungenerous chief!
Swear by thy faith, for what though mine
Conform now to the Koran's laws,
Acknowledged here within the harem,
Princess, my mother's faith was thine,
By that faith swear to give to Zarem
Giray unaltered, as he was!
But listen! the sad prey to scorn
If I must live, Princess, have care,
A dagger still doth Zarem wear,-
I near the Caucasus was born!'

She spake, then sudden disappeared,
And left the Princess in dismay,
Who scarce knew what or why she feared;
Such words of passion till that day
She ne'er had heard. Alas! was she
To be the ruthless chieftain's prey?
Vain was all hope his grasp to flee.
Oh! God, that in some dungeon's gloom
Remote, forgotten, she had lain,
Or that it were her blessed doom
To 'scape dishonour, life, and pain!

How would Maria with delight
This world of wretchedness resign;
Vanished of youth her visions bright,
Abandoned she to fates malign!
Sinless she to the world was given,
And so remains, thus pure and fair,
Her soul is called again to heaven,
And angel joys await it there!

-

Days passed away; Maria slept
Peaceful, no cares disturbed her, now,-
From earth the orphan maid was swept.
But who knew when, or where, or how?
If prey to grief or pain she fell,
If slain or heaven-struck, who can tell?
She sleeps; her loss the chieftain grieves,
And his neglected harem leaves,
Flies from its tranquil precincts far,
And with his Tartars takes the field,
Fierce rushes mid the din of war,
And brave the foe that does not yield,
For mad despair hath nerved his arm,
Though in his heart is grief concealed,
With passion's hopeless transports warm.
His blade he swings aloft in air
And wildly brandishes, then low
It falls, whilst he with pallid stare
Gazes, and tears in torrents flow.

His harem by the chief deserted,
In foreign lands he warring roved,
Long nor in wish nor thought reverted
To scene once cherished and beloved.
His women to the eunuch's rage
Abandoned, pined and sank in age;
The fair Grusinian now no more
Yielded her soul to passion's power,
Her fate was with Maria's blended,
On the same night their sorrows ended;
Seized by mute guards the hapless fair
Into a deep abyss they threw,-
If vast her crime, through love's despair,
Her punishment was dreadful too!

At length th'exhausted Khan returned,
Enough of waste his sword had dealt,
The Russian cot no longer burned,

Nor Caucasus his fury felt.
In token of Maria's loss
A marble fountain he upreared
In spot recluse;-the Christian's cross
Upon the monument appeared,
(Surmounting it a crescent bright,
Emblem of ignorance and night!)
Th'inscription mid the silent waste
Not yet has time's rude hand effaced,
Still do the gurgling waters pour
Their streams dispensing sadness round,
As mothers weep for sons no more,
In never-ending sorrows drowned.
In morn fair maids, (and twilight late,)
Roam where this monument appears,
And pitying poor Maria's fate
Entitle it the FOUNT OF TEARS!

-

My native land abandoned long,
I sought this realm of love and song.
Through Bakchesaria's palace wandered,
Upon its vanished greatness pondered;
All silent now those spacious halls,
And courts deserted, once so gay
With feasters thronged within their walls,
Carousing after battle fray.
Even now each desolated room
And ruined garden luxury breathes,
The fountains play, the roses bloom,
The vine unnoticed twines its wreaths,
Gold glistens, shrubs exhale perfume.
The shattered casements still are there
Within which once, in days gone by,
Their beads of amber chose the fair,
And heaved the unregarded sigh;
The cemetery there I found,
Of conquering khans the last abode,
Columns with marble turbans crowned
Their resting-place the traveller showed,
And seemed to speak fate's stern decree,
'As they are now such all shall be!'
Where now those chiefs? the harem where?
Alas! how sad scene once so fair!
Now breathless silence chains the air!
But not of this my mind was full,
The roses' breath, the fountains flowing,
The sun's last beam its radiance throwing
Around, all served my heart to lull
Into forgetfulness, when lo!

A maiden's shade, fairer than snow,
Across the court swift winged its flight;-
Whose shade, oh friends! then struck my sight?
Whose beauteous image hovering near
Filled me with wonder and with fear?
Maria's form beheld I then?
Or was it the unhappy Zarem,
Who jealous thither came again
To roam through the deserted harem?
That tender look I cannot flee,
Those charms still earthly still I see!

-

He who the muse and peace adores,
Forgetting glory, love, and gold,
Again thy ever flowery shores
Soon, Salgir! joyful shall behold;
The bard shall wind thy rocky ways
Filled with fond sympathies, shall view
Tauride's bright skies and waves of blue
With greedy and enraptured gaze.
Enchanting region! full of life
Thy hills, thy woods, thy leaping streams,
Ambered and rubied vines, all rife
With pleasure, spot of fairy dreams!
Valleys of verdure, fruits, and flowers,
Cool waterfalls and fragrant bowers!
All serve the traveller's heart to fill
With joy as he in hour of morn
By his accustomed steed is borne
In safety o'er dell, rock, and hill,
Whilst the rich herbage, bent with dews,
Sparkles and rustles on the ground,
As he his venturous path pursues
Where AYOUDAHGA'S crags surround!

[1] A Turkish pipe.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Black Shawl

As of senses bereft, at a black shawl I stare,
And my chill heart is tortured with deadly despair.

When dreaming too fondly in credulous youth,
I loved a Greek maiden with passion and truth.

My Greek girl was gentle and loving and fair;
But my joy quickly sank in a day of despair.

Once I feasted gay friends; ere the banquet was o'er
A Jew, the accursed, softly knocked at my door.

'Thou art laughing,' he whispered,'in pleasure's mad whirl;
But she hath betrayed thee, thy young Grecian girl.'

I cursed him; but gold as a guerdon I gave,
And took as companion my trustiest slave.

My swift charger I mounted; at once we depart,
And the soft voice of pity was stilled in my heart.

The Greek maiden's dwelling I hardly could mark,
For my limbs they grew faint, and my eyes they grew dark.

I silently entered—alone and amazed;
An Armenian was kissing the girl as I gazed.

I saw not the light; but I seized my good blade;
The betrayer ne'er finished the kiss that betrayed.

On his warm, headless body I trampled, then spurn'd,
And silent and pale to the maiden I turned.

I remember her prayers—in her blood how she strove;
Then perished my Greek girl—then perished my love.

I tore the black shawl from her head as she lay,
Wiped the blood-dripping weapon, and hurried away.

When the mists of the evening rose gloomy, my slave
Threw each corpse in the Danube's dark fastrolling wave.

Since then no bewildering eyes can delight;
Since then I forbear festive banquets at night.

As of senses bereft, at a black shawl I stare,
And my chill heart is tortured with deadly despair.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Caucas

The Caucas lies before my feet! I stand where
Glaciers gleam, beside a precipice rock-ribbed;
An eagle that has soared from off some distant cliff,
Lawless as I, sweeps through the radiant air!
Here I see streams at their sources up-welling,
The grim avalanches unrolling and swelling!

The soft cloudy convoys are stretched forth below,
Tattered by thronging mad torrents descending;
Beneath them the naked rocks downward are bending,
Still deeper, the wild shrubs and sparse herbage grow;
But yonder the forests stand verdant in flora
And birds are a'twitter in choiring chorus.

Yonder, cliff-nested-are dwellings of mortals,
There pasture the lambs in sweet blossoming meadows--
There couch the herds in the cool deepening shadows--
There roar the Aragua's blue sparkling waters,
And lurketh the bandit safe hid in lone caverns,
Where Terek, wild sporting, is cutting the azure!

It leaps and it howls like some ravening beast
At first sight of feeding, through grating of iron--
It roars on the shore with a furious purring,
It licks on the pebbles with eagerest greed.
Vain struggle and rancor and hatred, alas!
'Tis enchained and subdued by the unheeding mass.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Coach Of Life

Although her load is sometimes heavy,
The coach moves at an easy pace;
The dashing driver, gray-haired time
Drives on, secure upon his box.

At dawn we gaily climb aboard her
We're ready for a crazy ride,
And scorning laziness and languor,
We shout: 'Get on, there! Don't delay!'

But midday finds our courage wane,
We're shaken now: and at this hour
Both hills and dales inspire dread.
We shout: 'Hold on, drive slower, fool!'

The coach drives on just as before;
By eve we are used to it,
And doze as we attain our inn.
While Time just drives the horses on.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Coming Of Winter

Stanzas from 'Onegin'

Our Northern Winter's fickle Summer,
Than Southern Winter scarce more bland--
Is undeniably withdrawing
On fleeting footsteps from the land.
Soon will the Autumn dim the heavens,
The light of sunbeams rarer grown--
Already every day is shorter,
While with a smitten hollow tone
The forest drops its shadow leafage;
Upon the fields the mists lie white,
In lusty caravans the wild geese
Now to the milder South take flight;
Seasons of tedium draw near,
Before the door November drear!

From shivering mist ascends the morning,
The bustle, of the fields declines,
The wolf walks now upon the highway,
In wolfish hunger howls and whines;
The traveller's pony scents him, snorting--
The heedful wanderer breathless takes
His way in haste beyond the mountains!
And though no longer when day breaks
Forth from their stalls the herd begins
To drive the kine,--his noon-day horn recalls.
The peasant maiden sings and spins,
Before her crackling, flaming bright
The pine chips,--friend of Winter night.

And see! The hoar frost colder sparkles
And spreads its silver o'er the fields,
Alas! the golden days are vanished!
Reluctant Nature mournful yields.
The stream with ice all frozen over
Gleams as some fashionable parquet,
And thronging hordes of boyish skaters
Sweep forward on its crystal way.
On her red claws despondent swimming,
The plump goose parts the water cold,
Then on the ice with caution stalking
She slips and tumbles,--ah behold!
Now the first snowflake idling down
Stars the depressing landscape brown.

At such a season in the country,
What can a man's amusements be?
Walk? And but more of empty highway
And of deserted village see?
Or let him through the far Steppes gallop,
His horse can scarcely stand at all--

His stamping hoofs in vain seek foothold,
The rider dreading lest he fall!
So then remain within thy paling,
Read thou in Pradt or Walter Scott,
Compare thy varying editions,
Drink, and thy scoffing mood spare not!
As the long evenings drag away
So doth the Winter too delay.

FROM 'ONEGIN'

Sometimes he read aloud with Olga
A latter day romance discreet,
Whose author truly painted nature,
With cunning plot, insight complete;
Oft he passed over a few pages,
Too bald or tasteless in their art--
And coloring, began on further,
Not to disturb the maiden heart.
Again, they sat for hours together,
With but a chess board to divide;
She with her arms propped on the table,
Deep pondering, puzzled to decide--
Till Lenski from his inward storm
Captured her castle with his pawn!

FROM 'ONEGIN'

Love condescends to every altar,
Ah when in hearts of youth it springs,
Its coming brings such glad refreshment
As May rain o'er the pasture flings!
Lifted from passion's melancholy
The life breaks forth in fairer flower,
The soul receives a new enrichment--
Fruition sweet and full of power.
But when on later altars arid
It downward sweeps, about us flows--
Love leaves behind such deathly traces
As Autumn tempests where it blows
To strip the woods with ruthless hand,
And turn to soggy waste the land!

FROM 'ONEGIN'

How sad to me is thine appearing,
O Springtime, hour of love's unrest!
Within the soul what nameless languors!
What passions hid within the breast!

With what a heavy, heavy spirit
From the earth's rustic lap I feel
Again the joy of Springtide odors--
That once could make my spirit reel!
No more for me such pleasures thrilling,
All that rejoices, that has life,
All that exults,--brings but despondence
To one past passion as past strife,
All is but prose to such as he,
Wearied unto satiety.

Perchance we fain would pass unnoticed
That which in Autumn drooped and pined,
Now radiant in verdure springing,
Since it must of our loss remind;
As with a tortured soul we realize
In Nature's glad awakening,
That we shall never find renewal,
Who evermore are withering.
Perchance there haunts us in remembrance,
Our own most dear and lyric dream,
Another long forgotten Springtime--
And trembling neath this pang supreme,
The heart faints for a distant country
And for a night beside the sea!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Delibash

With the hostile camp in skirmish
Our men once were changing shot,
Pranced the Delibash his charger
'Fore our ranks of Cossacks hot.

Trifle not with free-born Cossacks!
Nor too o'er foolhardy be!
Thy mad mood thou wilt atone for--
On his pike he'll skewer thee!

'Ware friend Cossack! Or at full bound,
Off thy head, at lightning speed
With his scimitar he'll sever
From thy trunk! He will indeed!

What confusion! What a roaring!
Halt! thou devil's pack, have care!
On the pike is lanced the horseman--
Headless stands the Cossack there!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Dream

Not long ago, in a charming dream,
I saw myself -- a king with crown's treasure;
I was in love with you, it seemed,
And heart was beating with a pleasure.
I sang my passion's song by your enchanting knees.
Why, dreams, you didn't prolong my happiness forever?
But gods deprived me not of whole their favor:
I only lost the kingdom of my dreams.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Drowned Man

Children running into izba,
Calling father, dripping sweat:
"Daddy, daddy! come -- there is a
Deadman caught inside our net."
"Fancy, fancy fabrication..."
Grumbled off their weary Pa,
"Have these imps imagination!
Deadman, really! ya-ha-ha...

"Well... the court may come to bother -
What'll I say before the judge?
Hey you brats, go have your mother
Bring my coat; I better trudge...
Show me, where?" -- "Right there, Dad, farther!"
On the sand where netting ropes
Lay spread out, the peasant father
Saw the veritable corpse.

Badly mangled, ugly, frightening,
Blue and swollen on each side...
Has he fished in storm and lightning,
Or committed suicide?
Could this be a careless drunkard,
Or a mermaid-seeking monk,
Or a merchandizer, conquered
By some bandits, robbed and sunk?

To the peasant, what's it matter!
Quick: he grabs the dead man's hair,
Drags his body to the water,
Looks around: nobody's there:
Good... relieved of the concern he
Shoves his paddle at a loss,
While the stiff resumes his journey
Down the stream for grave and cross.

Long the dead man as one living
Rocked on waves amid the foam...
Surly as he watched him leaving,
Soon our peasant headed home.
"Come you pups! let's go, don't scatter.
Each of you will get his bun.
But remember: just you chatter --
And I'll whip you, every one."

Dark and stormy it was turning.
High the river ran in gloom.
Now the torch has finished burning
In the peasant's smoky room.
Kids asleep, the wife aslumber,
He lies listening to the rain...
Bang! he hears a sudden comer

Knocking on the window-pane.

"What the..." -- "Let me in there, master!"
"Damn, you found the time to roam!
Well, what is it, your disaster?
Let you in? It's dark at home,
Dark and crowded... What a pest you are!
Where'd I put you in my cot..."
Slowly, with a lazy gesture,
He lifts up the pane and - what?

Through the clouds, the moon was showing...
Well? the naked man was there,
Down his hair the water flowing,
Wide his eyes, unmoved the stare;
Numb the dreadful-looking body,
Arms were hanging feeble, thin;
Crabs and cancers, black and bloody,
Sucked into the swollen skin.

As the peasant slammed the shutter
(Recognized his visitant)
Horror-struck he could but mutter
"Blast you!" and began to pant.
He was shuddering, awful chaos
All night through stirred in his brain,
While the knocking shook the house
By the gates and at the pane.

People tell a dreadful rumor:
Every year the peasant, say,
Waiting in the worst of humor
For his visitor that day;
As the rainstorm is increasing,
Nightfall brings a hurricane -
And the drowned man knocks, unceasing,
By the gates and at the pane.

Translated by: Genia Gurarie, 11/95
Copyright retained by Genia Gurarie.
email: egurarie@princeton.edu
http://www.princeton.edu/~egurarie/
For permission to reproduce, write personally to the translator.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Duel

FROM 'EUGENE ONIEGIN '

28
Yes, foes!—How many days, bethink you,
Since hatred stepped the two between,
And since in hours of thought and leisure,
At work, at table, they have been
As comrades! Now, with purpose dread,
Like men in mutual loathing bred,
Each plans, as though in broadest day
A heavy nightmare on him lay,
The other's downfall in his heart.
Oh, could they smile but once, while still
Their hands are pure from deed of ill,
And then their sev'ral ways depart!
But worldly hate, like worldly fame,
Shrinks at the breath of worldly shame.

30
—Now, come together!
Calmly, coldly,
Not aiming yet, with haughty glance,
And tread assured and light, though measured,
The combatants four steps advance,
Four steps to death—whereon Eugene,
Still forward moving o'er the green,
(The other likewise) first began
To raise his weapon, fix his man. . . .
N ine steps now of the fateful quest
Were counted—Lensky, with a frown,
His left eye closed, took aim—when down
Oniegin's thumb the trigger prest. . . .
Reverse the sand-glass!—Lensky sighed—
No more!—and let his pistol glide.

31
He sought his breast with clutching fingers-
He fell, his glance grew dim, and still
It spoke of death alone, not torment,
As when upon some eastern hill
All sparkling in the morning light,
The snow-wreath vanishes from sight.
Oniegin, suddenly a-cold
With horror, saw his shot had told.
He hastened—o'er the poet's form
He stooped, he called his name—too late!
He was no more—untimely fate!
The flower had perished in the storm—
The music on the broken lyre,
And on the altar-stone, the fire!

32

And there he lay! How unfamiliar
Upon his brow the languid grace !
Beneath his breast the ball had pierced him,
The smoking blood ran down apace,
Thence, where, a few brief moments past,
The pulse of life was bounding fast,
Where hate and hope and love were strong,
And warm emotions wont to throng.
The heart is now a house bereft
Of former inmates—every floor
Is dark and still for evermore,
With dusty panes. The host has left;
And whither went he ? Who shall say ?
His very trace is swept away.

33
To write an epigram, a sharp one,
Your stupid foe to irritate,
Is very nice. To see him lower
His sullen horns, still obstinate,
And, nolens volens, in the glass
With shame behold himself and pass.
Twere nicer still (the fool!), should he
Stand there and gape—' 'Tis meant for me!'
And silently to dig your foe
An honoured grave, to aim with care—
Your mark, the pallid forehead there,
A generous distance off—we know,
Is nicest . But to see him fall
And lie, is scarcely nice at all!

34
We'll just suppose, my friend, your pistol Has stretched a young acquaintance dead—
Because of forward look or answer,
Because some idle thing he said
Had stung you o'er the wine last night,
Or even called you out to fight
Himself in boyish anger—well,
What kind of feeling, pray you, tell,
Came o'er you with a whelming rush,
When laid before you on the ground,
Without a motion or a sound,
He stiffens in the sudden hush ?
When dumb, with blinded stare, he lies,
Stone-deaf to your despairing cries ?

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The High Road In Winter

Between the rolling vapours
The moon glides soft and bright;
Across the dreary fallows
She casts a mournful light.

Along the wintry high road
A troika moves fleet;
Its little bells are ringing
One silver tone and sweet.

Some echo of my country
The driver's song recalls—
The memory of love yearnings
And noisy bacchanals.

No lights, no black-roofed dwellings—
Silence and snow ... I see
For mile on mile the road-posts
In striped monotony.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Last Flower

Rich the first flower's graces be,
But dearer far the last to me;
My spirit feels renewal sweet,
Of all my dreams hope or desire--
The hours of parting oft inspire
More than the moments when we meet!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Memorial

Beyond compare the monument I have erected,
And to this spirit column well-worn the people's path,--
Its head defiant will out-soar that famous pillar
The Emperor Alexander hath!

I shall not vanish wholly,--No! but young forever
My spirit will live on, within my lyre will ring,
And men within this world shall hold me in remembrance
While yet one Singer lives to sing.

My glory shall in future fly through distant Russia,
Each race in its own tongue shall name me far and wide,
The Slav, the Finn, the Kalmyk, all shall know me--
The Tungoose in his reindeer hide.

Among my people I shall be long loved and cherished,
Because their noblest instincts I have e'er inflamed,
In evil hours I lit their hearts with fires of freedom,
And never for their pleasures blamed.

O Muse, pursue the calling of thy Gods forever!
Strive not for the garland, nor look upon the pain--
Unmoved support the voice of scorn or of laudation,
And argument with Fools disdain!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Name

What is my name to you? 'T will die:
a wave that has but rolled to reach
with a lone splash a distant beach;
or in the timbered night a cry ...

'T will leave a lifeless trace among
names on your tablets: the design
of an entangled gravestone line
in an unfathomable tongue.

What is it then? A long-dead past,
lost in the rush of madder dreams,
upon your soul it will not cast
Mnemosyne's pure tender beams.

But if some sorrow comes to you,
utter my name with sighs, and tell
the silence: "Memory is true -
there beats a heart wherein I dwell."

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Night

My voice that is for you the languid one, and gentle,
Disturbs the velvet of the dark night's mantle,
By my bedside, a candle, my sad guard,
Burns, and my poems ripple and merge in flood --
And run the streams of love, run, full of you alone,
And in the dark, your eyes shine like the precious stones,
And smile to me, and hear I the voice:
My friend, my sweetest friend... I love... I'm yours... I'm yours!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Poet

Until he hears Apollo's call
To make a hallowed sacrifice,
A Poet lives in feeble thrall
To people's empty vanities;
And silent is his sacred lyre,
His soul partakes of chilly sleep,
And of the world's unworthy sons
He is, perhaps, the very least.

But once Divinity's command
Approaches his exquisite ear,
The poet's soul awakens, poised,
Just like an eagle stirred from sleep.
All worldly pleasures leave him cold,
From common talk he stays aloof,
And will not lower his proud head
Before the nation's sacred cow.
Untamed and brooding, he takes flight,
Seething with sound and agitation,
To reach a sea-swept, desert shore,
A woodland wide and murmuring...

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Prophet

Longing for spiritual springs,
I dragged myself through desert sands ...
An angel with three pairs of wings
Arrived to me at cross of lands;
With fingers so light and slim
He touched my eyes as in a dream:
And opened my prophetic eyes
Like eyes of eagle in surprise.
He touched my ears in movement, single,
And they were filled with noise and jingle:
I heard a shuddering of heavens,
And angels' flight on azure heights
And creatures' crawl in long sea nights,
And rustle of vines in distant valleys.
And he bent down to my chin,
And he tore off my tongue of sin,
In cheat and idle talks aroused,
And with his hand in bloody specks
He put the sting of wizard snakes
Into my deadly stoned mouth.
With his sharp sword he cleaved my breast,
And plucked my quivering heart out,
And coals flamed with God's behest,
Into my gaping breast were ground.
Like dead I lay on desert sands,
And listened to the God's commands:
'Arise, O prophet, hark and see,
Be filled with utter My demands,
And, going over Land and Sea,
Burn with your Word the humane hearts.'

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Roussalka

A LEGEND OF THE WATER-SPRITE

In forest depths, beside a mere,
A monk once made his habitation ;
Absorbed in penances severe,
In fast and prayer he sought salvation.
Already by his own poor spade
His grave was hollowed to receive him,
And every day the good saint prayed
That Heaven from earth would soon relieve him.

One summer's eve, the hermit poor,
At prayer within his narrow room,
Looked out beyond his humble door
And saw the forest wrapped in gloom ;
Night-mists were rising from the mere,
Between the clouds the moon 'gan peep;
The monk unto the pool drew near
And gazed into its waters deep.

He saw himself—drew back perturbed
By fears he ne'er had known before ;
For, lo, the waters were disturbed,
Then suddenly grew calm once more ;
'While fitful as a twilight shade,
Than virgin snow more purely white,
From out the pool appeared a maid
Approaching in the silver light.

She shook the bright drops from her hair
And gazed upon the anchorite ;
To look upon her form so fair
The good monk trembled with affright.
And he beheld her from afar
With head and hand strange signals make,
Then swifter than a shooting star
Dive back into the silent lake.

All night the hermit could not sleep,
All day in agony he prayed ;
But still he could not choose but keep
The image of that wondrous maid
Before him. So, when day did wane,
And overhead the moon was bright,
He watched, and saw her come again
In all her beauty, dazzling white.

She beckoned to him where he stood,
And gave him greeting glad and free.
She played and splashed about the flood,
She laughed and danced in childish glee,
As softly to the monk she cried :

' Come hither, monk, and join me here!'
Then suddenly she dipped to hide
Her beauty in the darkling mere.

The third day came—grown mad with love,
The hermit sought th' enchanted shore
Ere yet night's veil was drawn above,
And waited for the maid once more.
Dawn broke—the monk had disappeared . . .
And now the frightened children say
He haunts the pool: and lo! his beard
Floats on the water night and day.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Singer

Did you attend? He sang by grove ripe -
The bard of love, the singer of his mourning.
When fields were silent by the early morning,
To sad and simple sounds of a pipe
Did you attend?

Did you behold in dark of forest leaf
The bard of love, the singer of his sadness?
The trace of tears, the smile, the utter paleness,
The quiet look, full of eternal grief,
Did you behold?

Then did you sigh when hearing how cries
The bard of love, the singer of his dole?
When in the woods you saw the young man, sole,
And met the look of his extinguished eyes,
Then did you sigh?

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Song Of The Kasak

Kazak speeds ever toward the North,
Kazak has never heart for rest,
Not on the field, nor in the wood,
Nor when in face of danger pressed
His steed the raging stream must breast!

Kazak speeds ever toward the North,
With him a mighty power brings,
To win the honour of his land
Kazak his life unheeding flings-
Till fame of him eternal sings!

Kazak brought all Siberia
At foot of Russia's throne to lie,
Kazak left glory in the Alps,
His name the Turk can terrify,
His flag he ever carries high!

Kazak speeds ever toward the North,
Kazak has never heart for rest,
Not on the field, nor in the wood,
Nor when in face of danger pressed
His steed the raging stream must breast!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Talisman

Where the sea forever dances
Over lonely cliff and dune,
Where sweet twilight's vapor glances
In a warmer-glowing moon,
Where with the seraglio's graces
Daylong toys the Mussulman,
An enchantress 'mid embraces
Handed me a talisman.

'Mid embraces I was bidden:
"Guard this talisman of mine:
In it secret power is hidden!
Love himself has made it thine.
Neither death nor ills nor aging,
My beloved, does it ban,
Nor in gales and tempest raging
Can avail my talisman.

Never will it help thee gather
Treasures of the Orient coast,
Neither to thy harness tether
Captives of the Prophet's host;
Nor in sadness will it lead thee
To a friendly bosom, nor
From this alien southland speed thee
To the native northern shore.

"But whenever eyes designing
Cast on thee a sudden spell,
In the darkness lips entwining
Love thee not, but kiss too well:
Shield thee, love, from evil preying,
From new heart-wounds---that it can,
From forgetting, from betraying
Guards thee this my talisman."

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Upas Tree

Deep in the desert's misery,
far in the fury of the sand,
there stands the awesome Upas Tree
lone watchman of a lifeless land.

The wilderness, a world of thirst,
in wrath engendered it and filled
its every root, every accursed
grey leafstalk with a sap that killed.

Dissolving in the midday sun
the poison oozes through its bark,
and freezing when the day is done
gleams thick and gem-like in the dark.

No bird flies near, no tiger creeps;
alone the whirlwind, wild and black,
assails the tree of death and sweeps
away with death upon its back.

And though some roving cloud may stain
with glancing drops those leaden leaves,
the dripping of a poisoned rain
is all the burning sand receives.

But man sent man with one proud look
towards the tree, and he was gone,
the humble one, and there he took
the poison and returned at dawn.

He brought the deadly gum; with it
he brought some leaves, a withered bough,
while rivulets of icy sweat
ran slowly down his livid brow.

He came, he fell upon a mat,
and reaping a poor slave's reward,
died near the painted hut where sat
his now unconquerable lord.

The king, he soaked his arrows true
in poison, and beyond the plains
dispatched those messengers and slew
his neighbors in their own domains.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Vision

I remember a marvellous instant,
Unto me bending down from above,
Thy radiant vision appearing
As an angel of beauty and love.
'Mid the torments of desperate sadness,
In the torture of bondage and sighs,
To me rang thy voice so beloved--
And I dreamed thy miraculous eyes.
But the years rolled along--and life's tempests
My illusions, my youth overcame,
I forgot that sweet voice full of music--
And thy glance like a heavenly flame.
In the covert and grief of my exile,
The days stretched unchanged in their flight,
Bereft inspiration or power,
Bereft both of love and of light.
To my soul now approaches awakening,
To me thou art come from above,
As a radiant and wonderful vision--
As an angel of beauty and love.
As before my heart throbs with emotion,
Life looks to me worthy and bright,
And I feel inspiration and power--
And again love and tears and the light!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

The Wish

I shed my tears; my tears – my consolation;
And I am silent; my murmur is dead,
My soul, sunk in a depression's shade,
Hides in its depths the bitter exultation.
I don't deplore my passing dream of life --
Vanish in dark, the empty apparition!
I care only for my love's infliction,
And let me die, but only die in love!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Thou and You

She substituted, by a chance,
For empty 'you' - the gentle 'thou';
And all my happy dreams, at once,
In loving heart again resound.
In bliss and silence do I stay,
Unable to maintain my role:
'Oh, how sweet you are!' I say -
'How I love thee!' says my soul.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Thoughts

If I walk the noisy streets,
Or enter a many thronged church,
Or sit among the wild young generation,
I give way to my thoughts.
I say to myself: the years are fleeting,
And however many there seem to be,
We must all go under the eternal vault,
And someone?s hour is already at hand.
When I look at a solitary oak
I think: the patriarch of the woods.
It will outlive my forgotten age
As it outlived that of my grandfathers?.
If I dandle a young infant,
Immediately I think: farewell!
I will yield my place to you,
For I must fade while your flower blooms.
Each day, and every hour
I habitually follow in my thoughts,
Trying to guess from their number
The year which brings my death.
And where will fate send death to me?
In battle, in my travels, or on the seas?
Or will the neighbouring valley
Receive my chilled ashes?
And although to the senseless body
It is indifferent wherever it rots,
Yet close to my beloved countryside
I still would prefer to rest.
And let it be, beside the grave?s vault
That young life forever will be playing,
And impartial, indifferent nature
Eternally be shining in beauty.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

To ----

I remember the marvellous moment
you appeared before me,
like a transient vision,
like pure beauty’s spirit.

Lost in hopeless sadness,
lost in the loud world’s turmoil,
I heard your voice’s echo,
and often dreamed your features.

Years passed. The storm winds scattered,
with turbulent gusts, that dreaming.
I forgot your voice, its tenderness.
I forgot your lovely face.

Remote in my darkened exile,
the days dragged by so slowly,
without grace, without inspiration,
without life, without tears, without love.

Then my spirit woke
and you, you appeared again,
like a transient vision,
like pure beauty’s spirit.

And my heart beats with delight,
and ecstasy, inside me,
and grace and inspiration,
and tears, and life, and love.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

To Chadaev

The lies of fame and love’s resolve
Have vanished now without a trace,
Our youthful passions have dissolved
As though a dream or morning haze.
Yet, still, we’re burning with desire,
And with impatience in our souls,
Beneath the yoke of strength and fire,
We hark our country’s pleading calls.
In expectation, full of ardor,
The day of freedom we await, --
Thus waits a youthful, eager lover
The moment of the promised date.
And whilst with liberty we burn,
And whilst our hearts adore ovation,
Our country needs us, - let us turn
And dedicate our soul’s elation.
My friend, believe me that with thunder,
The star of joy will rise again!
And Russia will arise from slumber,
Our names will be incised with wonder
On remnants of oppressive reign!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

To Lily

Lily, Lily! I am sighing
With despair and hopeless woe.
I’m tormented and I’m dying,
And my soul has lost its glow,
But my love evoked no pity:
You consider me pathetic.
Keep on laughing: you are pretty
Even when unsympathetic.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

To My Friends

The chain of golden days and nights
Is still your heritage from Deity,
And, still, the languid maidens' eyes
Are turned to you as well intently.
So, play and sing, friends of my years!
Lose very quickly passing evening,
And, at your heedless joy and singing,
I will be smiling through my tears.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

To Natasha

The crimson summer now grows pale;
Clear, bright days now soar away;
Hazy mist spreads through the vale,
As the sleeping night turns gray;
The barren cornfields lose their gold;
The lively stream has now turned cold;
The curly woods are gray and stark,
And the heavens have grown dark.

Where are you, my light, Natasha?
No one's seen you, - I lament.
Don't you want to share the passion
Of this moment with a friend?
You have not yet met with me
By the pond, or by our tree,
Though the season has turned late,
We have not yet had a date.

Winter’s cold will soon arrive
Fields will freeze with frost, so bitter.
In the smoky shack, a light,
Soon enough, will shine and glitter.
I won't see my love, - I'll rage
Like a finch, inside a cage,
And at home, depressed and dazed,
I’ll recall Natasha's grace.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

To The Don

Through the Steppes, see there he glances!
Silent flood glad hailed by me,--
Thy far distant sons do proffer
Through me, greeting fond to thee!

Every stream knows thee as brother,
Don, thou river boasted wide!
The Araxes and Euphrates
Send thee greeting as they glide.

Fresh and strengthened for pursuing,
Scenting home within thy gleam--
Drink again the Don'ish horses,
Flowing boundary, of thy stream!

Faithful Don! There also greet thee
Thy true warriors bold and free--
Let thy vineyard's foaming bubbles
In the glass be spilled to thee!

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

To... (Kern)

I still recall the wondrous moment
When you appeared before my eyes,
Just like a fleeting apparition,
Just like pure beauty's distillation.

When'er I languished in the throes of hopeless grief
Amid the troubles of life's vanity,
Your sweet voice lingered on in me,
Your dear face came to me in dreams.

Years passed. The raging, gusty storms
Dispersed my former reveries,
And I forgot your tender voice,
Your features so divine.

In exile, in confinement's gloom,
My uneventful days wore on,
Bereft of awe and inspiration
Bereft of tears, of life, of love.

My soul awakened once again:
And once again you came to me,
Just like a fleeting apparition
Just like pure beauty's distillation.

My heart again resounds in rapture,
Within it once again arise
Feelings of awe and inspiration,
Of life itself, of tears, and love.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Under A Portrait Of Jukowsky

The charm and sweetness of his magic verse
Will mock the envious years for centuries!
Since youth, on hearing them, for glory burns,
The wordless sorrow comfort in them sees,
And careless joy to wistful musing turns.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Under The Blue Skies...

Under the blue skies of her native land
She languished and began to fade...
Until surely there flew without a sound
Above me, her young shade;

But there stretches between us an uncrossable line.
In vain my feelings I tried to awaken.
The lips that brought the news were made of stone,
And I listened like a stone, unshaken.

So this is she for whom my soul once burned
In the tense and heavy fire,
Obsessed, exhausted, driven out of my mind
By tenderness and desire!

Where are the torments? Where is love? Alas!
For the unreturning days'
Sweet memory, and for the poor credulous
Shade, I find no lament, no tears.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Upon The Hills Of Georgia

Dark falls upon the hills of Georgia,
I hear Aragva's roar.
I'm sad and light, my grief - transparent,
My sorrow is suffused with you,
With you, with you alone...My melancholy
Remains untouched and undisturbed,
And once again my heart ignites and loves
Because it can't do otherwise.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Why Feed The Early Signs Of Boredom?

Why feed the early signs of boredom
With sinister and dismal thought,
And wait for separation, burdened
With sorrow, lonesome and distraught?
The day of grief is close at hand!
You'll stand, alone, out in the sun,
And try to bring back once again
These days, but they will long be gone.
Misfortune! then, you'll be ready
To die in exile, on the street,
If you could only see your lady,
Or hear the shuffle of her feet.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

Winter Evening

The storm wind covers the sky
Whirling the fleecy snow drifts,
Now it howls like a wolf,
Now it is crying, like a lost child,
Now rustling the decayed thatch
On our tumbledown roof,
Now, like a delayed traveller,
Knocking on our window pane.
Our wretched little cottage
Is gloomy and dark.
Why do you sit all silent
Hugging the window, old gran?
Has the howling of the storm
Wearied you, at last, dear friend?
Or are you dozing fitfully
Under the spinning wheel's humming?
Let us drink, dearest friend
To my poor wasted youth.
Let us drink from grief - Where's the glass?
Our hearts at least will be lightened.
Sing me a song of how the bluetit
Quietly lives across the sea.
Sing me a song of how the young girl
Went to fetch water in the morning.
The storm wind covers the sky
Whirling the fleecy snow drifts
Now it howls like a wolf,
Now it is crying, like a lost child.
Let us drink, dearest friend
To my poor wasted youth.
Let us drink from grief - Where's the glass?
Our hearts at least will be lightened.

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin