

Classic Poetry Series

Velimir Khlebnikov
- poems -

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Velimir Khlebnikov(1885 - 1922)

Originally named Viktor Vladimirovich Khlebnikov, born on Oct. 28, 1885, in the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic in Russia. Khlebnikov grew up to be well-educated in the disciplines of science, nature, folklore, mythology, mathematics, literature, art, history, and languages.

A poet who became known as the founder of Russian Futurism and whose esoteric verses exerted a significant influence on Soviet poetry after his death. Khlebnikov is becoming recognized as one of the major Russian poets of the twentieth century, having for years been dismissed as a purveyor of unintelligible verbal trickery.

Velimir Khlebnikov died June 28, 1922.

Bo-Beh-O-Bi Sang The Lips

Bo-beh-o-bi, sang the lips,
Veh-eh-o-mi, sang the glances,
Pi-eh-eh-o, sang the brows,
Li-eh-eh-ey, sang the visage,
Gzi-gzi-gzeh-o, sang the chain.
Thus on a canvas of some correspondences
Beyond dimension lived the face.

Velimir Khlebnikov

Grasshopper

Wingletting with the golden scrawl
Of its finest sinews,
The grasshopper loaded its trailer-belly
With many coastal herbs and faiths.
"Ping, ping, ping!" tra-lah-ed the zingzinger.
O, swanderful!
O, illuminate!

Velimir Khlebnikov

Invocation Of Laughter

O, laugh, laughers!

O, laugh out, laughers!

You who laugh with laughs, you who laugh it up laughishly

O, laugh out laugheringly

O, belaughable laughterhood - the laughter of laughering laughers!

O, unlaugh it outlaughingly, belaughering laughists!

Laughily, laughily,

Uplaugh, enlaugh, laughlings, laughlings

Laughlets, laughlets.

O, laugh, laughers!

O, laugh out, laughers!

Velimir Khlebnikov

Midnight Estate

Midnight estate, Genghis Khanerate!
Rustle, blue birches.
Bright sunset, Zarathustrate!
And you, blue sky, Mozartate!
You twilight-cloud, be Goya!
And you at night, cloud, rainate!
A whirlwind of smiles just flew by,
Laughing with claws of shrieking,
Then I saw the hangman
And surveyed boldly the midnight hush.
And I called you, bold-featured,
And he brought the drowned back from the river.
"Their forget-me-not is louder than a scream," -
I told the sail of night.
The earth's axis splashed out another day,
Night's bulk is closing in.
I dreamed I saw a salmon-girl
In the waves of a midnight waterfall.
The pines are Tated by the tempest
And the Mongol rainclouds move,
Yet words close in, Cains of silence, -
And these saints are fallen.
And with his guard blue Hasdrubal
Walked heavily to the stone ball.

Velimir Khlebnikov

On This Day Of Sky-Blue Bears

On this day of sky-blue bears
Running across quiet eyelashes,
I divine beyond the blue waters
In the cup of my eyes an order to wake.

The silver spoon of my extended eyes
Offers me a sea buoying a storm petrel;
And I see how the Russian bird flies
Through unknown lashes to the roaring sea.

A sea of heavenlove has capsized
Someone's sail in the round-blue water,
But the first storm is hopeless and gone
And from now on the journey is spring.

Velimir Khlebnikov

Rus' You Are But A Kiss In The Frost

Rus', you are but a kiss in the frost!
The midnight roads are blueing.
Lips joined in a blue lightning bolt,
Clasped, he and she are blueing.
Sometimes at night lightning would spark
From the caress of two mouths.
And a bluing, languished lightning bolt
Would swiftly outline two coats.
And the night would shine intelligent and dark.

Velimir Khlebnikov

Today I Will Go Once Again

Today I will go once again
Into life, into haggling, into market,
And lead the army of my songs
To duel against the market tide.

Velimir Khlebnikov

When Horses Die

When horses die, they breathe
When grasses die, they wither,
When suns die, they go out,
When people die, they sing songs.

Velimir Khlebnikov

Where The Waxwings Used To Dwell

Where the waxwings used to dwell,
Where the pine trees softly swayed,
A flock of airy momentwills
Flew around and flew away.
Where the pine trees softly whooshed
Where the warblewings sang out
A flock of airy momentwills
Flew around and flew about.
In wild and shadowy disarray
Among the ghosts of bygone days,
Wheeled and tintinnabulated.
A flock of airy momentwills
A flock of airy momentwills!
You're warblewingish and beguilish,
You besot my soul like strumming,
Like a wave invade my heart!
Go on, ringing warblewings,
Long live airy momentwills!

Velimir Khlebnikov

Wind Is Song

Wind is song
Of whom and of what?
Of the sword's longing
To be the word.
People cherish the day of death
Like a favorite daisy.
Believe that the strings of the great
Are strummed by the East these days.
Perhaps we'll be given new pride
By the wizard of those shining mountains,
And I, of many souls captain,
Will wear a white snowcap of reason.

Velimir Khlebnikov