

Poetry Series

Victor Sklyarov
- poems -

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Victor Sklyarov(1 June 1953)

The English language has been my love since school. I was fascinated by the diversity of meanings that may be implied in one phrase. I discovered it reading Translator's Notebooks – a brilliant periodical with poetry and prose translations criticism. School was quite a chore to me and instead of making lessons I read books only slightly related to subjects studied: Dostoyevskiy, Shakespeare (in Russian translation – it was next to impossible to find his works in English at that time) , books on theory of relativity, history, etc. And, of course, I wrote poems in Russian. Later I burnt them all. Once I rhymed my composition. It was then that I made my first translation – Hamlet's soliloquy. The English text was published in Translator's Notebooks alongside with several translations and comments. It was extremely instructive practice and motivating too. There I also read the article entitled "Shakespeare's untranslated sonnet" with at least three variants of translation, all commented as inadequate ("My mistress eyes...") . Then I entered Krasnodar University. There were no boring subjects there. Even CPSU history was interesting. The lecturers urged us to read initial documents and not the textbook. And those, though incomplete and sometimes corrected documents, revealed party history as ceaseless chain of treacheries. Marxist philosophy was just negative polemics with opponents and I concentrated on the latter. Here in province it was possible to discuss anything, to express any doubts even at seminars and exams. All forbidden literature circulated easily. Books published abroad started to appear in second hand bookstores somewhere in mid '70. And a great number of pre-revolution editions appeared. I could afford buying new books almost every day on my student's maintenance allowance. Frankly speaking we couldn't understand dissidents – why shout what everybody knows? Every year we were sent to the collective farm to gather grapes for about a month. This inevitable gavel work annoyed me most of all in our socialism. Same as senseless meetings. But these were happy days. I read books on theory of information and principles of self-organization, experimented in yoga and telepathy. It was then that I understood why most experiments in telepathy failed. They bear no information. And information is that what is essential for the receiver. This is a condition precedent. If it is not essential – it is not perceived. Same is true with poetry and prose perception. There must be not a unison, but enhancing. If you enjoy a poem you wish to share it with other people and you start to translate. Here lies the problem: you must preserve same rhythm, same number of syllables, not to loose any of ideas and images, and, above all to preserve natural language. In English<>Russian translations the worst enemy is the length of words. They are much shorter in English. You either have to change the number of syllables but the melody would differ then or omit or add some images but this changes the impact. The secret of the poem's perception lies in

integrity of rhythm, melody, images and that what may be called subdrive (feeling enhancer) . This is heatening of feeling and then – a kind of stepping aside. Then the thing that resonates inside is released and enhanced by some outer harmony.

I have loved you. Perhaps the love's still hiding
Within the corners of my heart and soul
But do not think it would be disobliging,
Afflicting on my side you'll never know.

I have loved you, so silently, despairly
Timidity and jealousy perused
I have loved you so tenderly, sincerely
As God bless you be loved by man you choose.

I translated these Pushkin's lines only recently when suddenly remembered Byron's line that was an epigraph to one of Puskin's verses (And I have loved thee ocean..) . At that time I thought it was impossible to translate adequately from Russian.

After I graduated and escaped from schoolteacher work in Kalmykia (where pupils asked why I didn't beat them for their behavior) I learned what joblessness is. My work record card showed higher education and I was unable to become a worker – nobody wished to hire me, and I was unable to become a specialist – I did not have permission from the Ministry of education. I moved to Novorossiysk and half year after managed to become the customs officer. Every three years I changed jobs circulating between customs and higher marine school. My best 3 years were spent in a small self-supporting group headed by my father in law (ex-commercial director of the shipping company, now dead) . We were preparing weeklies and monthly reports for Russian major oil steamship companies. Often the material was at our own choice. I made digests of Admiralty law cases, translated charter-parties, etc. We were granted permission to read foreign newspapers and magazines Lloyd's List, Fairplay, Lloyd'd Law Reports. That was the time when Brezhnev died. Then I made several translations: My mistress eyes..., Kipling's Pict Song, some small poems of Ogden Nash. There were no computers, no internet, we could only dream about Encyclopaedia Britannica and free access to foreign books (though I had pretty big library) , but these were the only things we were missing. I got acquainted with the beauty of the English law, its irresistible logics and fairness. Those who leave in its jurisdiction are unable to notice it. Grand things are visible at distance. Our work was needful but financing was cut-off. Then the third Russian revolution occurred. Communist leaders divided national property between themselves, some remained communists, some proclaimed themselves

anticommunists, few became presidents, but each had a share of property. The mimicry was called democracy. But can the leopard change his spots? Those who, like me, were not party members or did not belong to party hierarchy gained nothing.

Democracy is too far-fetched notion
I just have negative emotion
Recalling slaves of Greece
That lived in peace
With their masters. Cheers!
Oh, sorry, it appears
I haven't finished yet.
Do not forget
The human rights
That are delights
To the slavocracy
And the bureaucracy.

Down with democracy
That's just autocracy
Of the chrysocracy
Of self-chosen peers...
Cheers!

The time for swindlers came to Russia. My knowledge and experience was required, but I didn't profit from it. I created several maritime and forwarding agencies ab ovo for those with initial capital together with my wife, then we divorced retaining good relations. My wife now has her own maritime agency where she works with my daughter. I secluded myself from society doing any work that people brought to me at my home. I wrote test papers, projects and diploma papers in a number of disciplines, made translations for private persons and for companies. About 6 years ago I had telephone installed and obtained Internet connection. I have Britannica and Encarta now ...

Soleness is what we seek when we are young.
Loneliness is what we get when we're old.
Most dreams when implemented seem like dung
That's what Ecclesiast for us foretold.

In moment of despair I started to make new translations from Russian into English and even sent them to Jeff Humphrey: Founder, Contest Director, Executive Editor of The Voices Network and he advised me to start writing my

own poems in English.

We are not destined to embrace
The way our word perceived is
And understanding, like God's Grace,
Depends on Heaven we're beneath
(hev)

Back in my youth I made a wonderful discovery: if you have some sincere non-profit wish it will implement the moment you completely forget it having realized its unenforceability. It doesn't depend on your actions – only wish and disinterestedness are counted. I used it several times. I'm sure the above is just one of the cases. D'you hear lawyer and researcher sounding now? I have many usually incompatible manifestations. This phenomenon was many times described by Dostoyevskiy and analyzed by Mikhail Bakhtin. Black-and-white linear perception is out of Bakhtin's approach and analysis. Bakhtin, to my mind, is the antecessor of the theory of chaos (and anti-chaos) approaches in terms of philosophy. Tracing the infinite bifurcation of inner dialogue he shows the fragile unity of opposite tendencies within one personage still having his own vector and the interaction of this personage with otherwise vector-oriented personages creating conflicts of immense depth. Moreover, Bakhtin traces the way Menippean satire structure and other ancient forms become embedded in contemporary novels. Such multidimensional viewing produces objective veritable picture. Please, read his works. I urge and plead you. They are available in English now. He is long dead. But that's a man who seems to ignore politics as if it were non-existent. I am unable to rise at that height. I am bound to 19-th century. I'm unable to accept and adopt further events.

I am in haste. My time's expiring.
So much to say I am desiring
In vain - no questions' firing
But for the begging help
I cannot help admiring
Of those who are attiring
As judges over wiring
Of concentration camp.

From watchtower security
Preserving their purity
Ignoring the obscurity
Of those beneath who yelp
They pose as the deputies

Appointed by the prisoners,
The inexactest reasoners,
The country's ever felt

The following is hardly my own voice I intended to write something different. And in Russian. But it happened so that I heard an irresistible melody and vowels symphony. This must be the spirit of time.

Voco vivi

In the vast desert I am calling for alive
Not to instruct, to preach, or to oblige
But just to talk, to see I'm not the last
Of living souls of the past;
To see the reasons those derive
The nation's dumbness. But, alas!
I see just zombies. I can't grasp
Why this is happening. The die is cast.
The current won't turn awry,
Ressentiment won't either. Should I strive
For something vague, or should I die?
My time has ended century ago, but why
I'm sill alive stuck in the loop of Time?

But having given it another thought I realized that it is not the spirit – it's the Muse. That Muse so many poets spoke about. And she is definitely female. She has no age – she lives out of Time. But what nobody has ever said, fantastic though it may sound, my Muse has nationality! She is definitely English though I am Russian. I could not write even small verse in Russian. I do not mean translation or a parody or imitation. But here it is different. Amidst urgent translation of the purely commercial text I suddenly recollected Hamlet's words I knew by heart since school (what an expression – to know by heart!) . Then some images emerged and I felt some strange snake-like rhythm. For some unknown reason I disliked blank verse. But I was compelled to use it despite my attempts to squeeze at least some rhymes. The image of crucified Russia merged with hopelessness of my own future.

Russified Hamlet

I overlived my time, but was it really mine,

Time stolen from the country less than an age ago?
Oh, brave new world! Big Brother's watching us
Writhing in slime, in hunger and in pains.
We're robbed again and spat in our face.
The cycle's over. End has come to time.
Pigs just like men, Swift's yahoos, Bosch's visions –
All in one place. Their name is Legion.
They torture us. The pressure's reached the crest
I'm wasteable. But what about the rest?

The rest is silence... I'm afraid eternal.

People in my country have long been regarded as a waste material. Before Peter the Great personal pronoun "I" had been identified with the first letter of Russian alphabet. After his reforms (including but not limited to linguistics) it became the last letter. Any outer reform of the language threatens nation's security. And we had two reforms. The first alienated us from Greek culture and that of predecessors. The second infringed links with Eastern Europe and predecessors. Now some are proposing the third. I can only regret that the so-called political correctness is destroying English.

Why I mention death so often? I had or seemed to have such experience. I have always had hemicrania. But once, when I was alone, my heart stopped to beat, breathing ceased, the panic seized each cell of my body, but mind was clear. I raised in the air above my body and flew to the door in order to unlock it. But hands went through the door and key. Unlocking the door seemed most essential task for me then. I was already dead but I wanted to facilitate entry for my daughter or ex-wife who might come. And I managed to concentrate and unlocked it. I returned to my body and waited what would happen next. Suddenly the heart resumed beating violently and capability to breath returned. After I came to myself (what a wonderful expression! Same exists in Russian) I checked the door. It was unlocked. Soon my girls came and arranged the brain scanning. Suspected arachnoidite (destruction of brain) . A doctor said I'd live one year at most if go on smoking, drinking coffee and beer. That was some five years ago. I am still chain-smoker, drink much coffee and 1,5 liters of beer every evening. Them, doctors!

However, eyesight is reducing and sclerosis is progressing.

Sklyarov's sclerosis is queer process.

I do not remember names, dates, figures, new faces to the extent that I often answer people without understanding who they are until they mention some

specific problem. And it turns out that I saw them many times.

The above was written some six years ago. Some things have changed since then. I practically stopped drinking beer, reduced smoking; and I translated some more Russian poets. And, what's most important, I stopped thinking of death and soon was impatiently awaiting the girlfriend to move to my home. Poetry practically saved my life and by all means has changed it. I'm still in utter poverty yet, but I'm making long-term plans. I write more poems in Russian now. I hope some of my poems will help to better understand Russian mentality and may even help somebody to overcome despair.

My idea is that one shouldn't fear
The misery and the despair
That might lead nowhere
Provided you don't hear
Soft voice of own Muse.
Do not abuse the Lord above and use
The chance you have to skew
The world outside from new
Point of view.

Victor Sklyarov

Actor

I am an actor in the game called life
Playing in play played thousand times
Repeating words that are already trite
Unable to change the course set by playwright
Destined to kill and to be cursed in rhymes
And wishing after effect to strive,
And sometimes causing applauding.

Victor Sklyarov

Advice

Solitude is what we seek when we are young.
Loneliness is what we get when we're old.
Most dreams when implemented seem like dung
That's what Ecclesiast for us foretold.

I have a piece of wisdom for the youth,
Anticipate you won't follow it though,
When someone says he has another truth
Beware cajolery - it's Goddamn zone.

Don't ever you dare to dream about sin,
But when involved, please recollect illusions,
Remember who has put you in that bin
And don't further jump to the conclusions.

You have a chance - we always have a chance -
To look in past to see survived through years
And scrutinize the values you enhance.
Then make compares.

Victor Sklyarov

Aye, Vanity, Obscenity's Thy Name!

Aye, vanity, obscenity's thy name!
Thou maketh people plunge into disgrace
To be the news in stupid media game
And lose forever own face.

Victor Sklyarov

Box

(translation from Russian poem of Natalia Nikiforova)

Came up referee and proclaimed
"Shake your hands" and the bout commenced
At me fiercely my rival aimed
I'd been measured and all assessed.

I'm alert and a little strained
But my back hits the rim of rope,
I miss hook, mouthshield flies astray,
Just hold on – I'm still on-the-go!

Taste of blood, angry trainer's shouts,
I won't fall, I am springing back,
And ahead I move in a bout
Concentrating will in a knack.

My contestant has puzzled air,
I just noticed fault in defense,
Now the chances are almost fair
And the bout may really commence.

Counterblow is strong, he is snapped,
He staggers on rubbery legs
With his breath coming out in pants
And the strength in the topmost peg.

My second hit's sharp and exact,
And knocks out my enemy's will.
Bout's over! And life is correct!
At the ring I am standing still.

Victor Sklyarov

Cassandra

My mind's my burden.
I am a laughing stock
For people here,
They all mock my fears
When I warn them
About murders
They can evade.
But they allow any sham
Persuade the mob of sheer folly.
When mob is robbed, by golly,
Their malice is less intensive
Than the contempt for me.
It's so offensive,
How could it be?
The tally is incentive.
Could all be blind?
Or am I out of my mind?

Victor Sklyarov

Don Quixote

I'm looking forward to the greatest of all loves
I do not see it yet, but I feel its approach
Despite my age, my health and previous vows,
A knight without fear and reproach.

I am not new – were many men before
Worthy the title “knight” by deeds and not by birth
My deeds are only words or statements or
Just position in the situations worth

Career only, or money, few times – life
But that's what counts is a readiness to loose
All that you have and risk a dive
Into a stream and not peruse

The chances to survive just as you see the threat
To the insulted and humiliated people.
Injustice stream is turbulent and dread.
It's difficult to swim crosscurrent ripple.

I am exhausted and the scores aren't even
Eternal battle can't be won but I don't care
I don't expect reward I could be given
I have got used to snobbery and sneer.

But what I hope without any reason
Before I'm hanged for some invented treason
The Lady of my dreams despite all lies
Would glance at me with loving eyes.

Victor Sklyarov

Each Man Has Own Fate

Each man has own fate.
It's no use to argue it
And to abuse the Lord we pray.
At any rate, each has received
What he deserves, we can't conceive
God's plans and God's reserves
Of helping us. We must observe
The principles set forth by Christ
And to surmise our sins be sized
Not only by deeds. We have to realize
Our thoughts have tendency to materialize.

Victor Sklyarov

Early Remorse

When I was young,
about five,
I understood
the language
of those speechless -
small kida,
beasts, trees
and insects.
I knew that
growing I'll
forget that language
and that
made me sad.
The sadness was acute,
and not childish.
I have lost
the understanding
of the speechless
and have not acquired
understanding of people.

Victor Sklyarov

Former Cossack Elite, Translation Of The Song By Igor Talkov

Former Cossack elite
Had been leaving for war
With the curses of dad
And the silence of brother
He responded: "I'd rather...
But you won't admit..."
Hugged his wife just a bit
And then added: "I'd rather..."

And he mounted the horse
Galloped half of a mile
But hold back at the side
Of the river backwater
And he threw his awards
And his last shoulder boards
Like the ties with past
And they sank to the bottom

Wind appeared from nowhere
Wrinkled face of the water,
And the leaves whispered: no
Nature grew circumspected
And the Cossack heard flow
Saying: "How can you go
To fight men of your own
For the people's state goal! "

Cossack jolted his head
And the prayer he read
And he put spurs to horse
To pore out his annoyance
And the horse jerked ahead
Like a devil it ran
To escape the cursed place,
Where awards sank to bottom.

He was carried about

With a wind through his land
Where the woods and the fields
Became champ of the battle
Former Cossack elite
Had succeeded in riot
And at very war end
He was leading an army.

But nature is so quaint
And the eye of the Lord
Sees mistakes we afford
Treading our thorny road
And last hour comes
On our own accord
At the end of our rope
We recall the God's code!

Former Cossack elite
Now having no army
He recalled curse of dad
And the Voice he cut dead
And the breechblock had clicked
And by the nine grams of lead
Sinful soul was released
To be met at Last Judgment

And the river has kept
The awards in its depth
And his last shoulder boards
They shall forever remain
Till the end of the time,
Till we hear last trump,
The most inseparable domain
Of the river called Don

Till the end of the time,
Till we hear last trump,
The most inseparable domain
Of the river called Don

Victor Sklyarov

From Euphoria To Depression

From euphoria to depression
Such is the pitch of poet's passion
To embrace life and to express
The corners hidden from the rest.
The depth of fall and height of rise
Will jointly manifest
The keenness of insights.
My own lines are just intended
To be amended at the best
By better poets of East or West.

Victor Sklyarov

Have Mercy To Your Time

Dark night has choked daylight. Day is dead.
It won't come back to senses any more.
You killed the time again. You must be mad
To waste the only treasure you afford.

Time is for living not for false alarm
About future and the outcome
Of the events that are not bringing harm
Just now. So my old chum

There's twink anon, so value twink
The future hell is not existing now
And it depends on what you feel and think
Will it take shape or just dropp out.

Victor Sklyarov

I. Talkov 'Gentlemen-Democrats', Translation Of The Song From Russian

Gentlemen-democrats of the nineteenth century
We would very much like to have all you revived
So that you see our present successes
And we would be able to give you rewards.
Each of us all would express his own gratitude:
The farmer – by sickle, the worker – by pick,
The imprisoned – by shackles, by prosthesis- ex-soldier
But as to myself – oh, I would have used brick.
 High class! High class!
 The USA and Europe prosper
 High class! High class!
 And we are left with bare...

Gentlemen-democrats of the nineteenth century
Why were you striving and threatening the Crown,
The nature's not stupid and God isn't a venture
And you have ignored them and didn't account
Perhaps you have been planning arrangement of borders,
Restructuring everything – fool's haste is no speed
But the nature can't follow your stupid orders
And God never reads leaflets with any decrees
 High class! High class! The USA and Europe prosper
 High class! High class! And we are left with bare...

Gentlemen-democrats, you know the example
When your own good colleagues had inspired the bloodshed
Killed the aristocrats – the enlightenment was ample,
Paris won't wash from this, though it's so well-bred.
The truth-seeker Radischev having learned of this carnage
Had almost chewed up his rebellious novel
He took leave of his senses and he stared at garbage
And cursing freemasons sat blankly in hovel.
 High class! High class! The USA and Europe prosper
 High class! High class! And we are left with bare...

Gentlemen-democrats, hurry up to arise, flirts,
Take a seat at the court, and be judged by fooled mass:

Time to answer for words, Chernyshevskiy and Hertson,
And the dreamer Belinsky, and the wizard Karl Max;
You will answer as well, those who came after them
To deprive our people of land and of justice.
You have turned free-born Russians into bondmen
Into prison you turned the very Great Russia!
High class! High class! The USA and Europe prosper
High class! High class! And we are left with bare...

Ad astra per aspera!

Victor Sklyarov

I.Talkov 'I'll Return', Translation Of The Song From Russian

I am dreaming to return from war
During which I was born and brought up
At impoverished ruined soil
Under rain of tears drop-out
But the tyrant's not buried yet
That declared war on this soil
And there seems to be no plug or end
To this war.

I am not going to presage
I am aware I'll return to stage
Maybe in some another age
Not at fool's cage but land of genius
Being a battle casualty
I'll rise from grave and will sing
At very first day that we'll celebrate
Returning from the war.

But when battle sometimes slackens off
At clock-hour halt, but not in line
About peace and about love
I compose, sing and write
The opponents heave sigh of relief
And my friends just say "It' a jolt..."
All of them misjudge me by their own belief
It's clock-hour halt
Just halt.

Tomorrow I'll show my rampage
I am aware I'll return to stage
Maybe in some another age
Not at fool's cage but land of genius
Being a battle casualty
I'll rise from grave and will sing
At very first day that we'll celebrate
Returning from the war.

I'll return from the war
I'll return

Victor Sklyarov

Internet Love

I've never seen her face
I do not know her place
She hides under the veil
Of internet e-mail.
But she's the only soul
Who's able to console
Delirium of my mind.
Though why she has to hide?

Victor Sklyarov

Intersection Of Worlds

There's hiding place between three intersecting worlds:
One is the Dreamland and we call Reality the other,
The third, the biggest, is Eternity. My sisters, brothers,
There's no death in this time swirl,
While balancing between their gravities
You won't find life about which to rave.
Inside the Time there is a cavity
Where "is" and "was" and "seems" are just the same,
There's no opposition as "the existing" and "the non-existing".
You'll find just wisdom, sadness, and the solitude,
You'll understand again earth's sighs, trees' whisper and wolf's bristling.
You'll realize that Evil is only inaptitude
Inherent to people incapable of love
And sharing world with others.
You'll see Eternity, Reality and Dreamland
From outside and the inside at the same time.
They will be both alien and yours.
But you'll be able to share with other people
Only vague memories when back to the Reality.
Hence – solitude and sadness.

Victor Sklyarov

Legend

The enemies approached
The borders of the kingdom,
Severe and well coached,
The end came to a fiefdom.

All men to death were ready
Though fiend was overtop
Their spirit being steady
But king had ordered stop.

He said, Let's try our fortunes,
From fate there's no flying,
Let's toss our lots in waters.
Will sink the lots of dying,

Let them screen-shield the door-steps
Of women and the children
They'll be our last forces
In case the walls have yielded.

Will turn down lots of wounded -
They will defend the fortress
Don't be on ill thoughts brooded
Just make it foe's hospice.

Remaining with me foray
At enemy at daybreak
Be fearless, with hurray
For us е р у Death await may.

Resembling the forked lightning
Against the thousands
They fought from early brightening
Till the sundown and

The corpses were surmounting
The fortress and at dusk insiders
With wild shouting
Had stopped remaining idlers,

Making disperse foe's army
At night returned to fortress -
They were alive without harming -
At face of death they were so faultless.

Victor Sklyarov

Lost Empire

I mourn the non-existing country I was born in
Though 't was a phantom of Empire I belong to
The alien land where I reside at dawning
Of the millennium is wrongful.

This can't be Russia. It's some aggregation
Of perverts, thieves, whores and con men in power
Sitting on branches of the wizened tree on ration
Of the dead souls that emerged last hour.

They are insatiable, their name is Legion
They are the law and profit's their religion.
They buy and sell and cheat -
That's their only treat.

This can't last long,
Or am I wrong?

Victor Sklyarov

Love

Love needs no blessings
When it happens.
Whatever dressings
It wraps in.

Victor Sklyarov

Love Song

If you met a girl in imperfect world,
You can't any more live without her,
Then you must be stern, stubborn and concerned
To change the whole world just by the three words:

I love you - world's changing,
I love you - time's hanging,
I love you - words banging
The world's rearranging.

Love's the force that bursts stars and universe,
They are all dispersed to give new life birth.
We must be disturbed, way our word is heard
May change the whole world, these only tree words:

I love you - world's changing,
I love you - time's hanging,
I love you - words banging
The world's rearranging.

Victor Sklyarov

Mature Love

To hear, to see,
To smell, to feel,
To taste, vibrating
With all sense organs rating
Love, most unreal,
It is ideal.

Victor Sklyarov

My Home Is My Castle?

I have a shabby castle of my own.
It is my home.
I must admit it's only a flat
And, frankly speaking, it's not mine at that.

My flat's a ruin – no repairs
Were made in twenty five odd years
The only things bought by me here
Are books and the computer gear.

The time has come, I am so told
The whole house's being sold!

Victor Sklyarov

Natalia Nikiforova 'The Wishes Will Sure Come True', Translation From Russian

The wishes will sure come true.
I close my eyes to see myself
Embracing again with you
Drawn closer by a thunder yelp.

The skies are frowning, pouring rain,
We tremble with cold or with fear
We are getting so close again...
I open my eyes - you are near.

Victor Sklyarov

Natalia Nikiforova, 'You Are Not Lonely', Translation From Russian

It's difficult, depressingly, I see,
Your soul bursts to pieces aching
And so lonely you feel
Your fruitless efforts are painstaking.

You have nobody to release the pain,
To share your joy, or just to bide the time
And I am uninvited by the way
Have come to you with my imperfect rhyme.

I dedicate you this verse
Sweeping away your woe
It will very soon disperse,
Because I am lonely too.

Victor Sklyarov

Peculiar Russian Mentality

Peculiar Russian mentality
We have only future or past
We often ignore the mortality
And risk our life at die cast.

We hate any limits or borders
Despise the conventions and laws
We have affection to robbers
And sympathy to the whores.

In pubs we are greatest of thinkers
In parliament – stupid as ass,
The only thing that still link us
Is that that we drink to excess.

Victor Sklyarov

Poetry

The poetry's the living creature
That's nourished by response
She's timid when you reach her
And ripens when you haunt
Her hiding place. If you besiege her
She'll leave seclusion and acquire features
Of splendid fairy they vaunt
Of taste and delicacy with admixture
Of fear of the unknown.
But if it happens that the contact breaches
She'll starve to death in wildwood ditches.

Victor Sklyarov

Polytheism Risk

When gods are many then, at worst,
The gift of any is the other's curse.

alternative variant:

Risk of making idols

With many idols who discord, at worst,
The gift of any is the other's curse.

Victor Sklyarov

Rules

People invent the rules for others to abide
They set restraints and sometimes very wide
Restrict the sequences of actions and decide
What's wrong or right. Our freedom's tied.
I speak of grammar. D'you think otherwise?

Victor Sklyarov

Russia, Translation Of Song By Igor Talkov

I'm ruffling leaves of old notes,
The general was executed,
I failed to reckon what behold
How the country had been sold
And let them all to have you looted

And from Dark Ages you emerged
Like giant to his feet arising
Your Petersburg prevented wars
By the superb effective force
In Catherine-age self-realizing.
Oh Russia

The sacred music of church bells
Lingering over Moscow air
To some it sounded like knell
And even slightest sounds spelled
The radicals to their despair

And golden domes of the Church
Were blinding their failing eye-sight
And irritated Evil's serfs
To the extent that they decided
To tear your eyes out and to blind you.

Oh, Russia

The skies burst open with a crush
The mob of Judases appeared
Cutting away the churches' heads
Proclaiming newest leader's rush
New crucifiers of believers
They tied you down with red flags
They knelt you down to meet death
The carnifex then raised his cleaver
And your death-warrant had been read
By bloodiest king and greatest leader.

Oh, Russia

I'm ruffling leaves of old notes,
The general was executed,
The old hand-written texts, they oath
And resurrect the shot-down truths
They are so hard to be revoked
By generation that was looted.

Oh, Russia

(my continuation)

Again skies opened with a crush,
Again same Judases appeared
They now disguised as democrats
To shreds they Russia's body tear,
To global aims they onwards rush
Sparing churches that they fear
They think that their aim is near,
But very soon they'll disappear
Just owing to their tear and wear.

Victor Sklyarov

Russified Hamlet

I overlived my time, but was it really mine,
Time stolen from the country less than an age ago?
Oh, brave new world! Big Brother's watching us
Writhing in slime, in hunger and in pains.
We're robbed again and spat in our face.
The cycle's over. End has come to time.
Pigs just like men, Swift's yahoos, Bosch's visions –
All in one place. Their name is Legion.
They torture us. The pressure's reached the crest
I'm wasteable. But what about the rest?

The rest is silence... I'm afraid eternal

Victor Sklyarov

Summer Rain. Translation Of The Song By Igor Talkov

Memory has seized stinging
Thoughts do not beat on the hands
You're going and I'm seeing
You off to the alien lands
You are the constant migrant
Looking for good luck
You came just to say that you went
And you fly again.
So scud.

Summer rain, summer rain
It today has pored so early
Summer rain, summer rain
Will clear my heartache curlie-wurlie
We shall share our grieves with it
By the water-blind pane
Summer rain, summer rain
Whispers it to me his wisdom:
You will come, come again
Come again, to return freedom
Missing one's time is most frequent of life plays
With two actors at stage.

Night dreams of you will soon vanish
Soon they will perish and, oh!
New dream will lighten and get warmth in my old cold home
When you have love, don't seek more loving
You'll realize with time
Now you don't want to hear my cry and you're lost for a while.

Summer rain, summer rain
It today has pored so early
Summer rain, summer rain
Will clear my heartache curlie-wurlie
We shall share our grieves with it
By the water-blind pane
Summer rain, summer rain
Whispers it to me his wisdom:
You will come, come again

Come again, to return freedom
Missing one's time is most frequent of life plays
With two actors at stage.

Victor Sklyarov

The Last Straw

A tear dropped on keyboard of PC
It slipped inside between the keys
It found its contact down the creek,
One reason more for me to weep.

Computer's dead with no response ahead,
To mournfulness I am now wed,
I can't think out what the worst expect,
Than this last straw that broke the camel's back!

Victor Sklyarov

To Memory Of Victor Tsoy, Translation Of The Song By I.Talkov

The poets are born not by odd chances
They must fly down to Earth from distant heights
Enigma of their fate only enhances
Accessible and common poets' lives

The eyes of such above-sky living envoys
Are always sad, they see another way
In our tangled world their souls shine forever
And light the way to worlds that ran astray

They walk away completing their mission
Being withdrawn by Super Worlds above
They are outside affection and volition
As per the cosmic gaming rule of thumb.

They are leaving making no commitments
The moment that the trumpets sound most
The poets, the actors, and musicians -
Physicians they are for tired souls.

The birds in woods have learned the songs of theirs
The field flowers for them entwine the wreaths
They walk away from us but they will never disappear
In their songs and poems they still breathe

Perhaps today or probably tomorrow
I shall become mysterious envoy
To Super Worlds where went and left us to our sorrow
The poet and composer Victor Tsoy.

Victor Sklyarov

Voco Vivi

In the vast desert I am calling for alive
Not to instruct, to preach, or to oblige
But just to talk, to see I'm not the last
Of living souls of the past;
To see the reasons those derive
The nation's dumbness. But, alas!
I see just zombies. I can't grasp
Why this is happening. The die is cast.
The current won't turn awry,
Ressentiment won't either. Should I strive
For something vague, or should I die?
My time has ended century ago, but why
I'm sill alive stuck in the loop of Time?

Victor Sklyarov

War Costs

The army that the battle lost
And yet had not at all dispersed
Is really a double worth
Than that which saved the costs.

Victor Sklyarov

What Is The Truth?

What is the Truth? Who needs it now?
Eternal questions and eternal doubt.

Victor Sklyarov

When I Had Died

When I had died
I realized how easy is to fly,
I had no weight, could move through walls,
And nearly sank through floor,
But shrugged away being abhorred
By sight of own corpse.
I'd fly away –
It would remain
Decaying near bedside.
I must be out of my mind,
The awful stink would make
Some poor strangers break
Steel door locked from inside.
I swam to door – the key's in lock
But hands I cannot see, as if in mock,
Slip down through key. I'm in havoc.
The key's big apple of my world,
My mind has swirled
I concentrate it, squeeze, rotate...
Ay, key has stirred! Just wait!
I double force, last effort – clicks the lock
The target's reached, I haven't been a flop.
Toil-worn I'm crawling back
To rest in own body bag.
Come what will be!
I hear beat -
It is my heart
Pulsate so hard.
And I can wheeze.
I struggle to feet
To check the door –
It's open. I am alive once more.

Victor Sklyarov

Word

I really do believe
In immortality of Word.
Once said it starts to live
When ceases to be heard,

It only may be observed,
Becomes the personage of endless play
Staged at the theatre named World,
Some for the centuries, some for a day.

Thus Oedipus is no longer king
And Hamlet's not involved in killing
They are the notions we bring
Expressing feeling.

I start to contemplate
About my fate
So drastically changed
Just by few lines exchanged.
Of all the accidents
I know not precedent.

Victor Sklyarov

You Are Going To Sea Translation Of Natalia Nikiforova's Poem From Russian

The time has come to part my dear feat
It's time for you to leave for distant seas.
The ever-changing winds and sweltering heat,
From them you'; ; never suffer a defeat.

The angry waves attack in vain the birth.
My darling, wave away the cloud of grief
I'll be with you for better or for worse
In thoughts, excuse my tears casual whiff.

Just wait, I'll touch loose-fitting sailor top
For luck at sea to be your bosom friend,
That'll keep your vessel and will never stop
And all calamities it'll put to end.

Take the Saint Nicholas icon with you
And let your Angel join him to preserve
You in our zealous prayers to review
And redirect the life that you deserve!

Victor Sklyarov