

EXTRACT FROM  
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# Vyacheslav Ivanov

By O. DESCHARTES

THERE are many poets—some of them famous—to whose works Dante's well-known lines might well serve as an epigraph:

Aguzza qui, lettor, ben gli occhi al vero,  
Chè'l velo è ora ben tanto sottile,  
Certo, che'l trapassar dentro è leggero. (*Purg.* viii. 19 sqq.)<sup>1</sup>

Ivanov is one of these poets. He, too, holds poetry to be the sure path to a direct, profound, and intimate penetration into the domain of truth. 'This is the realm of the anagogical in the medieval sense of the word: *docet quid speres anagogia.*'

Ivanov wrote and spoke much about the psychology of creativeness. Yet for many years he never explained how this realm of 'the anagogical' had been revealed to himself, never spoke of his mystical initiation. It was not until a few days before the beginning of the Second World War (August 1939) that he wrote in a letter to a friend about this decisive inward event:

About thirty years ago, together with a noisy, merry crowd I was driving through a long dark gorge towards the Black Sea coast. Suddenly in the midst of the voices of my fellow-travellers, I heard something like a faint call coming from deep within me—or was it merely the distant sound of the breakers echoing in my soul? I heard a few Latin words; they were so unexpected, that at first I could not grasp their meaning. The more I reflected upon this call, the more full of significance did it appear to be: that which I had previously vaguely apprehended—and which these words suggested with a gentle insistence—was now so convincingly self-evident that it seemed like a new and concrete discovery. *Quod non est debet esse; quod est debet fieri; quod fit erit*—these were the words I heard. Faithful to my habit of transmuting all that I found deeply moving into rhythmic images, I tried to enshrine my *arcanum* in a couplet:

Quod non est, Pater esse iubet fierique creatum  
Spem iusso fieri Spiritum afflat: 'eris'.

That which relates to *esse* also applies to beauty. 'It would seem that the beauty of the first *esse* is most often found in poets and artists of the "Vergilian" type, to whom the world appears sad, and who are tormented by a sweet dream-like remembrance of a pristine earthly paradise. We encounter beauty on the *via dolorosa* of our "becoming" (*stanovlenie*)—*fieri*—whenever the "being" (*bytie*) upon which our becoming is based reveals

<sup>1</sup> Ivanov himself quotes these lines in connexion with Dostoevsky (*Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky*, p. 109).

itself directly to the senses. Becoming in itself is ugly; it is only the light of being filtering through it that makes it beautiful, when the hand of gracious Charis guides the structural pattern.' For man the way to the second, higher form of being lies naturally through becoming (*per realia ad realiora*). Yet 'to contemplate Beauty in its triumph, one must experience a mystical and prophetic afflatus'.<sup>1</sup>

Ivanov attempts a thorough examination of entity (*sushchnost'*), of the true higher reality, of reason, and of the idea of the object—*res*. For him this *res* appears first as an event in his inner consciousness, a kind of inexpressible, incommunicable event. Then he grasps it intuitively and, with the help of poetry, makes himself its master. True poetry is for him the 'echo' of a primordial incantation or of an ancient myth; for him a myth is invariably a primordial form, the imaginative cognition of extra-sensory entities. Finally, in common with all Platonist poets, who show us the invisible world through a thin, transparent veil (Dante's *velo sottile*), he begins to perceive acts crystallized in images and rhythms, and then proceeds to develop dialectically and to construct metaphysically the same *res* that was originally revealed to him. It is for this reason that his poems are always the direct reflection of his spiritual discoveries, while his articles on philosophy and his scholarly researches are, as it were, invariably the 'theoretical version' of his poetry, its interpretation, and an exhaustive commentary upon it. In spite of a complete indifference to logical links between the various pieces, and in spite of the lyrical excursions which caused him to sing now one theme and now another, an innate and inherent constructive principle unifies all the varied aspects of Ivanov's work; his poems and hymns, his sonnets and *canzoni*, his epic legends, his occasional verse, and his hieratic tragedies composed in classical metres, all form an integral whole; his visions unite in a single harmonious system. To this system, which 's'asconde sotto il velame degli versi strani'<sup>2</sup> a future article will be devoted: here we offer the reader only some biographical and bibliographical data and a consideration of Ivanov's place in Russian literature.

Vyacheslav Ivanov was born in Moscow on 16/28 February 1866. His father, a land surveyor and, later, a civil servant, died when his son was five years old. The boy was brought up by his mother, who belonged to a clerical family and who gave him a religious education. The inti-

<sup>1</sup> Quotations are from a letter of Ivanov to Professor Karl Muth (the editor of *Hochland*), written at the end of Aug. 1939. Professor Muth died during the Second World War. The philosophical part of the letter was printed with Ivanov's permission in the Autumn 1946 issue of *Mesa*. The original is in German.

<sup>2</sup> O voi ch'avete gl'intelletti sani,  
Mirate la dottrina che s'asconde  
Sotto il velame delli versi strani. (*Inferno*, ix. 61 sqq.)

Ivanov quotes these lines (*Freedom and the Tragic Life*, p. 109).

mate knowledge of the Eastern Orthodox liturgy and of Church Slavonic which he absorbed as a child has left its mark on his style and on the structure of his verse. After completing his secondary education he entered the University of Moscow, and while only a first-year student in the Historico-Philological Faculty was awarded a prize for an essay on classical languages. His teachers, among them Pavel Vinogradov (later Sir Paul, and Corpus Christi Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford), recognized his academic promise and arranged for him to go to Berlin, where he studied under Mommsen for five years. In 1891 Ivanov went to Paris, and in the following year paid the visit to Rome which he had long postponed in the belief that he was not yet fit to see the 'Eternal City'. In Rome he studied archaeology for three years, finished his doctoral dissertation and developed it into a book. The book won Mommsen's praise, and he suggested that the young scholar should take the Berlin *Privatdocent* examination and should establish himself at the University as a teacher of Roman history.

At that time, however, an interest in Nietzsche had turned Ivanov's attention from Roman history to the study of Hellenic civilization, and particularly of Dionysiac religion. But the very study of the Dionysiac cults estranged him from Nietzsche: Nietzsche, having discovered Dionysus, saw in him Christianity's antithesis. Ivanov, the admirer of Dostoevsky and Vladimir Soloviev's disciple, showed that the religion of Dionysus 'was a stream that poured all its waters into the Christian ocean'; he showed that the Dionysiac religion, as it is revealed in its true nature (and especially in the Orphic mysteries), is essentially a stepping-stone on the path to Christianity—the 'Old Testament of the Gentiles'. In the rites and myths of Christianity the Greeks might have recognized their mysteries, but

it was in the Person of the 'Galilean'—as Julian is said to have called Christ—that the transforming element lay. By its faith in his Person and in its unique importance, Christianity gave life to the world and subdued it; but here the Gentile comprehension failed to follow it.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere he says:

For us no less, Dionysus, as the symbol of a certain area of the inward state—of that sphere of inward experience where believers and catechumens of widely differing schools meet on common ground—is above all the true *how* and not a *what* or a *who*. Dionysiac ecstasy is not linked with any religious confession, for it follows a different principle of coordination of religious phenomena, and since it does so, is numbered not among faiths and rules, but among inward states and inward modes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ellinskaya religiya stradayushchego boga*, pp. 209–22 (the reference is to one of three copies of the edition in book form which survived the fire in 1917). Cf. also *Dionis i pradiionisiystvo*, p. 182. For details of Ivanov's work see the bibliography appended to the present article.

<sup>2</sup> *Po zvezdam*, pp. 304–5. The distinction is an important one: some obtuse critics, more

In Rome Ivanov met Lydia Zinov'eva-Annibal, who was to play such an important part in his life.<sup>1</sup> She sensed in him the great poetic gifts which no one else had suspected; and it was thanks to her that he found his true self. They married, and travelled widely together, living for long periods in England, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Greece. They visited Palestine and Egypt, and often went back to Russia in the intervals of their travels.

While he was in Paris in 1896 Ivanov received a telegram telling him that his verse had, without his knowledge, been shown to Vladimir Soloviev, who found in it 'the most important thing of all: absolute originality', and who now asked to be allowed to publish it in periodicals. Thereafter, on each occasion that Ivanov visited Russia until Soloviev's death in 1900, he met the man whom he considered to be his country's greatest philosopher and whom he honoured as a poet and as a literary critic. Their meetings were of great significance for his spiritual development.

Ivanov's first volume of collected poems, *Kormchie zvezdy*, appeared in 1903. It handled original themes with striking novelty and perfection of form and aroused controversy among the critics and the public. In the following year he published his second collection of verse (*Prozrachnost'*), a tragedy (*Tantal*), a number of essays on aesthetics and on philosophical themes, and the important series of articles entitled *Ellinskaya religiya stradayushchego boga*.

When Ivanov returned to Russia in 1905 he took his place as one of the leaders of the new movements in literature and thought. It was a time of intellectual crisis among the *avant-garde* of the Russian intelligentsia; positivism in philosophy and naturalism in art were being supplanted by opposite tendencies. In Ivanov there were combined the religious tendency which stemmed from Dostoevsky and Vladimir Soloviev, and the new trend in literature. Ivanov's famous 'Tower'—the house with a tower in St. Petersburg in which he settled with his wife after returning to Russia—became the meeting-place of a philosophic and artistic *élite*, which gathered there on Wednesdays. It was there that new philosophic trends were first discussed and clarified; it was there that young poets read their literary first-fruits. Berdyaev records that at Ivanov's 'Wednesdays' there could be seen the representatives of the most diverse tendencies and professions—writers and scholars, artists and philosophers, priests and actors, Neo-Christians and communists, orthodox and anarchists, decadents and pedants. Discussion ranged over the most varied topics: literature, drama, philosophy, religion, the attracted than enlightened by Ivanov's work on Dionysus, have foolishly attributed to him an attempt to compare Dionysus with Christ, or even to substitute him for Christ!

<sup>1</sup> Lydia Zinov'eva-Annibal—on the Annibal side a collateral of Pushkin—was a remarkable person in her own right. She published two collections of sensitive and penetrating short stories, a novel (*Tritsat' tri uroda*), a number of critical essays, and a play (*Kol'tsa*).

occult, the latest academic or literary scandal, and ultimate problems of being—all might be discussed. But the chief stress was on artistic and religious problems; for most of the visitors to the ‘Tower’ were connected with the new aesthetic and philosophical journals, with *Mir Iskusstva*, *Novy put’*, *Voprosy zhizni*, *Vesy*, or *Zolotoe runo*. ‘It was a kind of cultural alembic, a meeting-place for diverse currents of thought, and a phenomenon of great significance in our intellectual and literary history. . . . The “Wednesdays” are a brilliant episode in the history of our cultural development.’<sup>1</sup>

Together with Alexander Blok and Andrey Bely, Ivanov formed the school of ‘mystical, religious, and realist symbolists’ in antithesis to the earlier school of symbolists who, under the leadership of Bryusov and Bal’mont, stood in the tradition of French symbolism. The triumvirs of ‘religious symbolism’ may have differed among themselves, but one thing they possessed in common: their spiritual parentage. Ivanov wrote in a poem addressed to Blok:

. . . братом буду я тебе  
На веки вечные в родимой  
Народной мысли и судьбе.  
Затем, что оба Соловьевым  
Таинственно мы крещены;  
Затем, что обрученьем новым  
С Единою обручены.

(Нежная Тайна.)

. . . I will be thy brother  
To the end of time in native,  
People’s, thought and fate.  
For we were both mysteriously  
Christened by Soloviev:  
For in a new wedlock  
We were wedded with the One.

Their conceptions of this ‘One’ or ‘*Sophia*’ differed, but they none-the-less all believed in a distant ‘dawning’ and all shared a presentiment of impending catastrophe which they foretold in verse. Blok wrote to Ivanov:

. . . И наши души спели  
В те дни один и тот же стих.

. . . And in those days  
Our souls sang one and the same song.

While their prophecies remained dark they followed the same path and stood shoulder to shoulder; but when they began to be understood, they parted and each went his own way.

In 1907 there came the sudden death of Lydia Zinov’eva-Annibal. Ivanov remained in St. Petersburg until 1912, teaching literary history and poetics. But though the ‘Wednesdays’ continued for some time, the ‘Tower’ was no longer the same: ‘The “Wednesdays” had lost their soul’ as Berdyaev put it.<sup>2</sup> The old life was quenched, but Ivanov was still surrounded by a host of friends, and was as productive as ever. In 1909 he published a collection of philosophical, aesthetic, and critical articles—*Po zvezdam*; in the same year and in 1912 there appeared two

<sup>1</sup> N. Berdyaev, ‘Ivanovskie sredy’, *Russkaya literatura XX veka*, pod red. S. A. Vengerova, viii, 97–100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

new volumes of collected verse—*Cor Ardens*. They contain all the poetry he had written since 1904, but the greater part of the volumes consists of poems and sonnets dedicated to his wife's memory. Ivanov later married a daughter of his wife's first marriage, Vera, and they together spent the winter of 1912–13 in Rome, where he continued his researches on the origins of the cult of Dionysus. A volume of collected verse written in the summer of 1912—*Nezhnaya tayna*—was published in Russia at this time. From the following year until 1920 he was in Russia with his wife, son, and daughter. Ivanov made his home in Moscow, but he paid frequent visits to St. Petersburg. The outbreak of the First World War found him in the country at a village on the River Oka; but in summer the whole family would usually go either to the Crimea or to the Caucasus. In the autumn of 1916 they did not return to Moscow, and spent the whole of the following winter at Sochi. There he was busy with his translations from Aeschylus (the *Eumenides*, *Choëphoroe*, *Persae*, and *Septem contra Thebas* were completed there—the *Agamemnon* he had already translated at Rome in 1913), and a number of the poems printed below also date from this period. At the time of the February Revolution he was at Sochi, but he returned to Moscow in the autumn of 1917 before the Bolshevik seizure of power. In 1915 he wrote a tragedy, *Prometei*, and in the following year he published his second volume of collected essays—*Borozdy i mezhy*. This was followed in 1917 by a third collection—*Rodnoe i vseleenskoe*. In 1918 he completed and published an autobiographical poem *Mladenchestvo*, which he had begun while he was in Rome in 1913. During the years 1918 to 1920 his articles and verse appeared in periodicals, especially in *Zapiski mechtateley*. Among the poetry were extracts from the fourth part of his poem *Chelovek*, which he completed in 1919 (its first three parts had been written as early as 1915). These years were the hardest in Ivanov's life: the whole family suffered severely from the appalling cold and from hunger, and in 1920 his second wife, Vera, died at the age of thirty. Yet it was during these years that Ivanov was writing his great sonnet-cycles: in 1919 *Zimnye sonety*, in 1920 *De profundis amavi*. The latter is a harrowing account of the passing of the body and soul through the fires of suffering. But 'though the flesh is weak, the spirit is strong', and the spirit conquered. 'We must confess', writes F. Stepun, 'that Ivanov's poetic career is a rare example of continuous ascent and improvement. *Amor*, the poet's friend and guide, led him—like Petrarch—ever upwards "di pensier in pensier, di monte in monte".'<sup>1</sup>

In 1921 the *Perepiska iz dvukh uglov* appeared. This consists of twelve letters which passed between Ivanov and M. O. Gershenzon during a month in the summer of 1920, when, ill and exhausted, they shared a room in the 'Convalescent Home for Workers of Science and Literature'

<sup>1</sup> F. Stepun, 'Vyacheslav Ivanov', *Sovremennye zapiski* (Paris), lxii (1936), 243.

in Moscow. In order to avoid the disturbance of their studies which interminable conversation would have brought about, they began to write to each other on important topics 'from one corner of the room to the other'. This little book, which came into being in such a fortuitous way, was unexpectedly successful, and has been translated into several languages.

In addition to his original work, Ivanov wrote many translations in which he skilfully preserved the metres of his originals. For example, he translated the first ode of Pindar (1899), a dithyramb of Bacchylides (1904), poems of Alcaeus and Sappho (1914), almost the whole of Aeschylus (1913-17), all Novalis's lyrics, a number of Petrarch's sonnets, Byron's *The Island*, some of Baudelaire's poems, Dante's *Vita nuova*, and some of Michelangelo's sonnets.

After his second wife's death in 1920 he took his son and daughter to Baku, where for four years he held the University Chair of Classical Philology. While there he completed (and published in 1923) a large monograph, *Dionis i pradionisiystvo*, which he presented to the University as a doctoral dissertation. When the University wished to grant him the degree of doctor *honoris causa* he declined and, like Petrarch before him, defended his dissertation in the ordinary way. He did much research, but his poetic fire did no more than smoulder; after Vera's death he wrote no verse for four years. In the autumn of 1924 he was at last able to leave Russia with his family. He went to Rome, and his poetic genius flamed once again. Soon after his arrival, at the end of 1924, he wrote the *Rimskie sonety*, the first of which, entitled *Regina viarum*, begins with the following invocation to the city, the witness of so many turning-points in his life:

Вновь, арок древних верный пилигрим,  
В мой поздний час вечерним «Ave Roma»  
Приветствую как свод родного дома,  
Тебя, скитаний пристань, вечный Рим.

Once again a faithful pilgrim to thy ancient walls,  
In my twilight hour, with an evening *Ave Roma*  
I hail thee as my native roof-tree,  
Thou wanderer's haven, thou eternal Rome.

Ivanov then proceeds to a review and an estimate of his whole spiritual position, and seeing himself in imagination as a monk of the third century, like St. Jerome, he writes a 'Palinode':

Ужели я тебя, Эллада, разлюбил?

Can it be, Hellas, that I have fallen out of love with thee?

After a momentary rejection of humanism there follows a reevaluation of it in the spirit of Christianity and its reaffirmation as *Docta Pietas*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Il Convegno* (Milano), xiv (1933), No. 8/12, pp. 316-27; *Corona*, vii, Heft 1.



In Rome the sense of 'universal disunion' (the theme of *Kormchie zvezdy*) became morbidly acute. The existing divisions within the Church, the disunity of that which is essentially one, was wholly unlike the living plurality of the Angels of the Seven Churches of St. John, the guardians of the nations. This division, springing from a Satanic tendency towards disparateness, weakens the City of God, and profits only the powers of evil. Œcumenicity (*sobornost'*) is the principle of unity in the City of God; it unites the living with the living and the living with the dead, it springs from the *Memoria Aeterna* and creates the *Communio Sanctorum*.

'O fools, and slow of heart to believe' (Luke xxiv. 25)—to Ivanov it seemed that it was to him that these words of rebuke were spoken by the Pilgrim on the road to Emmaus; and on 4/17 March 1926 (St. Vyacheslav's day in Russia) he joined the Roman Catholic Church, and for the first time felt himself 'to be orthodox in the full, true sense of the word', happy in the thought that in his own soul at least the divided Churches were united.<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1926 he was invited to teach Russian language and literature in the University of Pavia and modern languages in the Almo Collegio di S. Carlo Borromeo. During the eight years he remained there he wrote a number of articles chiefly for the periodical *Corona*. Among the translations of his works into various languages which he made and his revisions of earlier writings, the most notable was his book on Dostoevsky, which includes articles from *Borozdy i mezhy* and *Rodnoe i vselenskoe* and much new material. In 1934 the University of Florence offered him the Chair of Russian Literature, but the Government refused to confirm his appointment, since he was not a member of the Fascist Party to which all newly appointed professors then had to belong. In the winter of 1934 Ivanov moved to Rome, where he became Professor of Slavonic Languages in the Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum. Between the years 1936 and 1939 he published a series of poems and two articles on Pushkin in *Sovremennye zapiski* (Paris). His long poem *Chelovek* (which he had completed in Moscow in 1919) appeared in Paris on 28 August 1939, on the eve of the outbreak of the war. In 1944, a momentous and decisive year for Rome, Ivanov wrote a verse cycle, *Rimskiy dnevnik*. His chief scholarly work during the war was an edition with commentary of the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles and the Book of Revelation. The aim of the commentary was 'to draw attention to the interpretations by the Fathers of the Eastern Church of the Apostolic writings'. In the last year of his life he wrote an introduction and commentary to the Psalms.

Vyacheslav Ivanov died in Rome on 16 July 1949. A few hours before his death he made minor corrections to a sonnet written some months earlier. This sonnet is an addition to *De profundis amavi*, and the poet

<sup>1</sup> 'Lettre à Ch. Du Bos', *Correspondance d'un coin à l'autre* (Paris, 1931), pp. 175-6.

asked that it should be placed third in order in the cycle. The sonnet, which is published below (p. 72, iii), is Ivanov's last completed work: a long novel which he regarded as his *corona vitæ* remains unfinished.

In literary history Ivanov is known as the founder and leader of religious, 'realistic' symbolism in Russia. Together with Alexander Blok and Andrey Bely, he formed a triumvirate who advanced their new doctrine of realistic symbolism in opposition to the 'decorative' symbolism of Bal'mont, Bryusov, and Sologub. Lack of understanding was a powerful enemy to the three pioneers: 'No one was able either to hear our message or to understand what we said', Blok complained. But in the end victory was theirs.

At every stage in the history of art, Ivanov wrote, two inner forces, two trends, inherent in the very nature of art, have decided its direction and conditioned its development. These two equal and conflicting principles of artistic activity are, on the one hand, the principle of *signification*—the principle of the discovery and transfiguring of an object—and, on the other, the principle of *transformation*—the principle of the alteration and invention of an object. In the first case, something which has being is affirmed and revealed; in the second, through an effort of the will, something is seen to be worthy of being. The first tends towards objective truth, the second towards subjective imagination. Ivanov neatly and precisely characterizes various artists and historical epochs to show how these two fundamental principles can be seen in eternal conflict throughout the ages.

Having reached his own day, Ivanov dwells on the subject of Baudelaire's sonnet 'Correspondances', which was accepted as the 'fundamental teaching and, as it were, the profession of faith of the new school of poetry', and evaluates the two principles in it. In the first two quatrains the poet likens Nature to a temple:

La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers  
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;  
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles  
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent  
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,  
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,  
Les parfums, les couleurs et les sons se répondent.

According to Ivanov the symbols here are far from being a mere human device or a convention. They reveal the real mystery of nature, which is living and is based entirely upon esoteric correspondences, upon relations and harmonies in that which appears to our mortal ignorance to be disparate and inharmonious. The poem is a mystical investigation

of the esoteric truth about things, a revelation of things that are more 'real' than the things themselves (*realiora in rebus*).

But in the second part of the sonnet Ivanov considers that Baudelaire is unfaithful to himself:

Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,  
Doux comme les hautbois, verts comme les prairies,  
— Et d'autres, corrompus, riches et triomphants,

Ayant l'expansion des choses infinies,  
Comme l'ambre, le musc, le benjoin et l'encens,  
Qui chantent les transports de l'esprit et des sens.

Here the poet no longer attempts to penetrate the hidden life of the essence of objects. He is content to make us experience in recollection a series of fragrances and to combine them by means of striking associations with a number of visual or auditory perceptions; this enriches our perceptive self. We have become sophisticated; we have made a psychological experiment, but the very conception of such an experiment is one of artificial experiencing. The mystery of the thing itself (*res*) is almost forgotten. This predilection for the artificial rather than for the essential in the new symbolism sprang from the Parnassian tradition; decadence has here extended Parnassian precept to its ultimate limits; it is merely a sham revolt against the canons of idealistic, pseudo-classical art.

Where then are we to seek the criterion for discriminating between the two elements? It lies in the very concept of 'symbols'. A symbol is a sign or a signification: it does not stand for or express any single definite idea. Otherwise it would be merely a hieroglyph, and a combination of several symbols would be 'graphic allegory', a communication in code which needs to be read with the help of a key. In different spheres of consciousness the same symbol has different meanings. Like a ray of light a symbol travels through all the levels of being and all the spheres of consciousness; on each level it signifies different entities and in each sphere it fulfils a new function. The symbol, like a descending ray, appears at each point of intersection with each sphere of consciousness as a sign whose meaning is figuratively yet completely revealed by a corresponding myth. Thus, the snake has a symbolic relation both to the earth and to incarnation, to sex and to death, to sight and to knowledge, to temptation and to illumination. It represents different entities in different myths. Yet the whole body of snake-symbolism and every one of its different meanings are linked together by the great cosmogonic myth, in which each aspect of the snake-symbol has its place in a hierarchy of the planes of the divine all-pervading unity. A myth is the objective truth about entity, it is the key to the imaginative cognition of extrasensory entities. A true myth is far from being fiction or allegory;

it is the hypostasis of a certain entity or 'energy'. In remote ages when myths were genuinely created, they answered the questions posed by experimental reason in that they represented *realia in rebus*. (Not all myths, however, are collective in origin; some derive from a mystical vision, and have become popularized.) By disclosing symbols, i.e. signs of another reality in the reality of surrounding objects, art makes our reality significant.

Realistic symbolism presupposes that the poet possesses a mystical insight and demands a similar insight in his reader. Here the symbol is a principle linking disparate consciousnesses, which unites them through the common mystical contemplation of that objective reality which all can perceive:

Снятся ль знаменья поэту? Или знаменье — поэт?  
Знаю только: новой свету, кроме вещей, песни нет.

(Нежная тайна.)

Are signs seen by the poet in visions? Or is the sign—the poet?  
I know only this: there can be no new song for the world save a prophetic one.

'Idealistic' symbolism, on the other hand, is directed towards man's sensory perceptions. Its symbols are a poetic device designed to induce a single subjective experience in a number of readers. Its pathos lies in the creation of illusion; its illusion is coercive and imposes its will upon the surface of things.

But if the artist consciously strives to become a vessel for the creative powers of the World Soul, 'for the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God' (Rom. viii. 19), then he will become the artist-theurgist and not the artist-tyrant; he will become him of whom it was said: 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench' (Isa. xlii. 3; Matt. xii. 20). His ear will be attuned and the language of things will be revealed to him; his eyes will grow keen and he will learn to know the meaning of forms and to perceive the sense of phenomena. He will strive to interpret and proclaim the hidden purpose of entities. It is only through such spiritual receptiveness that the artist can become the bearer of the divine revelation.<sup>1</sup>

But when Ivanov brilliantly characterizes representatives of 'significatory' symbolism—of symbolism which is 'realistic' in the highest sense—for example, Phidias, Aeschylus, Dante, Cimabue, Raphael, Michelangelo, Calderón, Shakespeare, Goethe, Dickens, and Dostoevsky, he passes beyond the limits of symbolism as a literary movement and trenches upon general questions of the psychology of creativeness, of the

<sup>1</sup> V. Ivanov, 'Dve stikhii v simbolizme', *Zolotoe runo*, 1908, Nos. 3/4, 5; reprinted in *Po zvezdam*, pp. 247-91.

defining and elaboration of aesthetic principles, and of the establishing of the limits of art.<sup>1</sup>

A great thinker, and especially an artist, cannot be contained within the limits of any one school. Ivanov established the nature of symbolism with exemplary clarity, and in so doing transcended it. And at St. Petersburg in January 1914, during a public debate on contemporary literature, the leader of Russian realistic symbolism made a speech in which he definitely claimed that he had done so:

. . . Dante was thus a symbolist. What is the significance of this for our characterization of the Russian symbolist school? It means that we dissolve ourselves as a school. We do this not because we wish to repudiate anything or because we intend moving in a new direction; on the contrary, we remain absolutely true to ourselves and to the direction our work has taken from the start. But we have no use for sects; our creed is a universal one. The true symbolist is, of course, not concerned with the fortunes of what is ordinarily understood by a school or a trend, as defined by historical landmarks and the names of artists; he is concerned to establish firmly a certain single general principle. And this principle is the symbolism of all true art; even though time may show that we who have affirmed it were at the same time its least worthy exponents.<sup>2</sup>

Thirty years after his first article on symbolism, Ivanov recalled its sources in Baudelaire and pronounced his verdict:

Even in the embryonic stage of modern symbolism, one can distinguish two currents: the one a purely Latin idea of it as a latter-day form of art—the art of the *epigoni*—with a purely Alexandrian conception of the beauty inherent in decadence, of the seductive luxuriance of flowering decay; the other a presentiment of a new revelation, in which the mystery of the inward life of the world and its meaning shall be made plain. Both currents pulse in the veins of symbolism and make it seem hybrid and dual. And as a result of this original sin, the school which boasted of its honourable though now empty title of ‘symbolism’, is now everywhere quite dead. Yet symbolism possessed an immortal soul, and since the great problems it posed have found no answers within its framework, we must await the appearance of other forms and more perfect expressions of ‘eternal symbolism’ in the more or less distant future.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. Ivanov, ‘Simvolika esteticheskikh nachal’, *Po zvezdam*, pp. 21–33; ‘O granitsakh iskusstva’ (a lecture delivered to the Moscow Religio-Philosophical Society in 1913); ‘Granitsy iskusstva’, *Borozdy i mezhi*, pp. 190–229.

<sup>2</sup> For the text of the speech see *Zavety*, 1914, Book II, part 2, pp. 80 sqq. It also appears (as ‘O sekte i dogmate’) in the form of an excursus to the essay ‘Mysli o simvolizme’ at pp. 160–3 of *Borozdy i mezhi*.

<sup>3</sup> From Ivanov’s essay on Symbolism in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, xxxi (1937), 793–5. He there points out that this contradistinction between ‘eternal’ and ‘decorative’ symbolism was first established by Charles Maurras. Ivanov himself used the terms ‘realistic, religious’ for the former type, and ‘idealistic, subjective’ for the latter.

## A Select Bibliography of Ivanov's Works

## POETRY

- Кормчие звезды С.-Петербург, 1902
- Прозрачность Москва: Скорпион, 1904  
An English translation of the poem 'Kochevniki krasoty' from this collection made by Sir Maurice Bowra appeared in his *Book of Russian Verse* (London: Macmillan, 1943).
- Тантал Москва: Скорпион, 1905  
A German translation of this work in iambic trimeters (the metre of the original) was made in 1908, but not published until 1940: *Tantalos. Tragödie*. Deutsch von Henry von Heiseler (Dessau: Karl Rauch Verlag, 1940).
- Эрос С.-Петербург: Оры, 1907
- Cor Ardens*. Т. 1-2. Москва: Скорпион, 1909-11  
English translations of the poems 'Ropot' and 'Put' v Emmaus' by Sir Maurice Bowra appear in his anthology referred to above. In his *Second Book of Russian Verse* (1948) two more poems are translated: 'Ulov' and 'Pokhorony'.
- Нежная тайна С.-Петербург: Оры, 1912
- Прометей Петроград: Алконост, 1919  
A tragedy, written in 1916.
- Младенчество Петроград: Алконост, 1918  
A long poem, begun in Rome in 1913 and completed in Moscow in 1918.
- Человек Париж: Дом Книги, 1939  
Written in Moscow, Parts 1 to 3 in 1915, Part 4 and the Epilogue in 1918 and 1919. There is an Italian translation: *L'Uomo*. Trad. in versi di Rinaldo Küfferle (Milano: Fratelli Bocca, 1946).
- Свет вечерний Оксфорд  
A definitive edition of Ivanov's later and unpublished poems. In preparation.

Ivanov made a very large number of occasional translations. These include versions from originals by, for example, Dante, Petrarch, Michelangelo, Novalis, Goethe, Byron (*The Island* and other poems), and Baudelaire. He also translated from Armenian, Tatar, and other languages. A few of the translations appeared in *Cor Ardens*, but most of them were published separately in various literary journals and in newspapers and have never been collected.

French translations of six of Ivanov's poems are included in Jean Chuzeville, *Anthologie des Poètes Russes* (Paris: Georges Crès, 1914).

Italian translations of a number of Ivanov's poems (including some made

by Ivanov himself) appear in a special issue of an Italian periodical which was dedicated to Ivanov—*Il Convegno* (Milan), xiv (1933), No. 8/12.

PHILOSOPHICAL, AESTHETIC, AND CRITICAL STUDIES

По звездам С.-Петербург: Оры, 1909

The essay 'Russkaya ideya' from this collection has been translated into German: *Die russische Idee* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1930).

Борозды и межи Москва: Мусагет, 1916

The essay 'O sushchestve tragedii' from this collection has been translated into German: 'Der Sinn der antiken Tragödie', *Hochland*, xxxiv (1936/7), Heft 3. The essay on Dostoevsky, together with an essay on the same subject which appeared in the next collection of studies, and much additional material, were later fashioned by Ivanov into a separate work on Dostoevsky. The Russian text is unpublished, but a German translation appeared in 1932 (*Dostoevskij*. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1932), and an English version has recently been published (*Freedom and the Tragic Life: A Study in Dostoevsky*, translated by N. Cameron. Foreword by Sir Maurice Bowra. London: Harvill Press, 1952).

Родное и вселенское Москва: Леман и Сахаров, 1917

Гёте на рубеже двух столетий Москва: Мир, 1912

Кризис гуманизма (Кручи) Петроград: Алконост, 1918

A German translation (with the title *Klüfte*) appeared in Berlin in 1929.

Переписка из двух углов Петроград: Алконост, 1921

With M. Gershenzon. Translated into French: 'Correspondance d'un coin à l'autre', *Vigile*, i (1930), No. 4; another edition (including the letter to Ch. Du Bos) was published in Paris by Corrèa in 1931. Italian translation: *Corrispondenza da un angolo all'altro* (Lanciano: Carabba, 1932). Spanish translation: 'Correspondencia desde un ángulo a otro', *Revista de Occidente* (Madrid), cxvii-cxviii (1933). A German translation was the first to appear ('Briefwechsel zwischen zwei Zimmerwinkeln', *Die Kreatur*, i (1926), No. 2), and has been followed by two other versions. Those published by the Siegel-Verlag at Frankfurt in 1946 and by E. Klett at Stuttgart in 1948 include the letter to Du Bos; the Herder edition which appeared at Vienna in 1949 includes the letter to A. Pellegrini in addition. Two versions have appeared in New York: one in the Winter 1947 issue of *Mesa*, and the other in *Partisan Review* for September 1948.

Гоголь и Аристофан Москва, 1926

Published in Meyerhold's theatrical periodical. German translation: 'Gogol und Aristophanes', *Corona*, iii (1933), Heft 5.

О Пушкине Москва: Госиздат, 1927

Concerned with the problem of the 'sound image' in Pushkin's poetry.

«О Пушкине», *Современные записки* (Париж), lxiv (1937).

The special number of *Il Convegno* referred to above contains two essays by Ivanov (in Italian) and also translations into Italian of some of his earlier essays.

During the period from 1931 to 1949 Ivanov published a number of essays in French, German, and Italian. He wrote chiefly for the German periodicals *Corona* and *Hochland*.

CLASSICAL PHILOLOGY AND TRANSLATIONS FROM GREEK

«Первая Пифийская ода Пиндара» С.-Петербург, 1899

Published in the *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya*. The translation is in the metre of the original.

«Тезей. Дифирамб Бакхилида» Москва: Скорпион, 1904

Published in *Prozrachnost'*. An annotated translation in the metre of the original.

*De Societatibus Vectigalium Publicorum Populi Romani*

С.-Петербург: Имп. Археол. Общество, 1910.

Эллинская религия страдающего бога

Appeared partly in *Novyy put'* for 1904 and partly (under the title 'Religiya Dionisa') in *Voprosy zhizni* for 1905. An edition in book-form was almost completely destroyed by fire in Moscow in October 1917.

Алкей и Сафо

Москва: Сабашников, 1914

Translations of selected lyrics and fragments in the metres of the originals, with an introductory essay.

Эпос Гомера

Москва: Мир, 1912

Ivanov's translations from Aeschylus (the *Oresteia*, *Persae*, and *Septem contra Thebas*), in the metres of the originals, had been accepted for publication by Sabashnikov and were in the press in 1917, when the Revolution caused them to be abandoned.

Дионис и прадионисийство

Баку: Гос. Типография, 1923

'Vergils Historiosophie', *Corona*, i (1931), Heft 6.

'Humanismus und Religion: zum religionsgeschichtlichen Nachlass von Wilamowitz', *Hochland*, xxxi (1933/4), Heft 10.

Both the above studies were written in German by Ivanov himself.

Ivanov's edition of the Psalter (Church Slavonic and Russian texts) was published at Rome in 1950 by the Tipografia Vaticana.



## Forty-one Sonnets by Vyacheslav Ivanov

Vyacheslav Ivanov was a master of the poet's craft, yet virtuosity was never his aim. In his Preface to *Nezhnaya tayna* he wrote:

I must confess that during my long consideration of the nature of poetry I have unlearned the capacity for discerning the bounds which measure it off into separate, time-honoured divisions: as far as content is concerned I can no longer distinguish what is desirable in poetry from what is not. For me the criterion of 'the poetic' (in this context the verbal incarnation of a spiritual state) is formal worth—and by this I do not mean technical perfection in the narrow sense, but, in a wider and a deeper sense, the complete artistic identity of form and content.

In his attempts to achieve this identity Ivanov did not shrink from using simple forms on occasion, but he more often turned to difficult and exigent forms. Of these difficult forms the sonnet attracted him most; and among his 219 sonnets (the total includes those printed below) there are *bouts-rimés*, *sonetti di riposta con coda*, and even an acrostic. He wrote sequences, sonnet-cycles, sonnets in series, and two sonnet-garlands (Венок Сонетов, *Sonnettenkranz*). This last form is unrepresented in the literatures of England, France, or Italy—on poetic grounds a seemingly justifiable absence. For it is difficult to conceive of an experience that insistently demands that it be enshrined in this highly refined form and no other—a form consisting of fifteen sonnets interwoven in such a way that the last line of each sonnet reappears as the first line of the succeeding one, and in which the last line of the final sonnet is the same as the first line of the initial sonnet in the cycle; the fifteenth sonnet (which may be placed at the beginning or the end of the cycle) consists of the initial lines of the other fourteen arranged in order.

The sonnet-garland, with its exaggerated formal complexity, would seem to stand condemned either as a mere technical exercise or as one of the songs sung by the siren of virtuosity. Ivanov's particularity is that he took refuge in the form at times when literary experiments were farthest from his thoughts: the sonnet-garland was a vehicle for the expression of his most poignant experiences and profoundest reflections.

Ivanov wrote the sonnet 'Lyubov' (*Kormchie zvezdy*, p. 188), in which he addressed his beloved wife, during the happiest period of his life. After her death he constructed a mystical, memorial sonnet upon each line of this deeply-felt and dedicated poem, and the fourteen sonnets, together with the original poem that gave them birth, form the sonnet-cycle in *Cor Ardens* (ii. 33-41). Some years later, when the First World War was raging, Ivanov, meditating on the nature of evil and the destiny of man, found that the sonnet was the only mould into which he

could pour his thoughts. And these thoughts, born of suffering and almost inexpressible, again took the form of a sonnet-garland, the series 'Dva grada' which forms the third part of the long poem *Chelovek*.

The sonnets which are printed below are the sixth part of Ivanov's *Svet vecherniy*, a volume of collected poems which is being prepared for publication at Oxford. The poems were written in many different places and over a long period of time, but all date from after the appearance of his last verse-collection, *Nezhnaya tayna*, which was published in 1912.

The dates and places of composition of the poems are as follows:

- |                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. 'Yavnaya tayna'           | Sochi, 1 March 1917              |
| 2. 'Son'                     | Sochi, June 1917                 |
| 3. 'Porog soznaniya'         | Sochi, 13 January 1917           |
| 4. 'Nag vozvrashchus''       | Sochi, Winter of 1916            |
| 5. 'Vnutrenee nebo'          | Moscow, 15 January 1915          |
| 6. 'Pamyati Skryabina, I' }  | Moscow, soon after 14 April 1915 |
| 7. 'Pamyati Skryabina, II' } |                                  |
| 8. 'Novodevichiy monastyr''  | Moscow, 1915                     |
| 9. 'Parizh, I'               | Moscow, 2 October 1915           |
| 10. 'Parizh, II'             | Moscow, 3 October 1915           |
| 11. 'Yazyk'                  | Pavia, 10 February 1927          |
| 12-23. 'Zimnie sonety'       | Moscow, end of December 1919     |

This group of twelve sonnets was written at Christmastide 1919, at a time when the poet's wife and children were ill and in a hospital half-a-dozen miles outside Moscow; and when Ivanov, himself physically exhausted and half-starving, used to travel out in an open sleigh in the bitter cold to visit them.

- 24-32. 'De profundis amavi'      Moscow, June, July, August, 1920

This is a group of nine sonnets. The first was written on 14 June, the second on 17 June, the third (Ivanov afterwards placed it fifth) on 18 June, and the fourth on 22 July 1920. All four were written in a convalescent home for writers at the same time as the *Perepiska iz dvukh uglov*. The others, commencing with the sixth, were written in Moscow: the sixth and seventh in July, and the eighth and ninth at the beginning of August. The last breaks off after the octave: Ivanov felt no impulse to complete it and could not bring himself to do so—his wife, Vera Konstantinovna, was ill, and died a few days later (he had not suspected that her illness was to prove fatal). There is a parallel here with a similarly unfinished sonnet, written thirteen years earlier (in October 1907), and published in *Cor Ardens* (i. 79): in this case the sonnet was begun on the day before the onset of the sudden illness from which Lydia Zinov'eva-Annibal was to die within a week.

A gap of twenty-nine years separates the third sonnet, which begins with the words 'Prilip ognem snedayushchiy khiton . . .' (p. 72 below), from the rest of the group. Ivanov composed it in draft a few months before he died, putting the final touches to it on 14 July 1949, two days before his death. He left instructions that it should be placed third in the cycle 'De profundis amavi'.

33-41. 'Rimskie sonety'

Rome, December 1924 and  
early January 1925

Ivanov added the following notes to the sonnets in this group:

- I. «ТЫ, ЦАРЬ ПУТЕЙ»—«Roma», для древних, «царица дорог» (Regina Viarum) и «новая Троя».
- II. «У ЮТУРНСКОЙ ВЛАГИ»— Диоскуры (Кастор и Поллукс) впервые, по легенде явились на Форуме; там, напоив коней у колодца Ютурны, возвестили они гражданам победу, одержанную войском при озере Регилле (496 г. до Р. X.).
- V. «В КЕЛЬЮ ГОГОЛЯ ВХОДИЛ ИВАНОВ»—Знаменитый русский живописец, Александр Иванов, долго работавший в Риме, бывал частым гостем Гоголя на via Sistina.
- VI. «ТВОИХ, ЛОРЕНЦО, ЭХО МЕЛАНХОЛИЙ»—Фонтан «delle Tartarughe», изваяния которого были созданы в 1585 г. флорентийским скульптором Таддео Ландини, вызывают в памяти поэтический мир Лоренцо «Великолепного».
- VIII. «НАВСТРЕЧУ ВЛАГЕ-ДЕВЕ»—Ключевая жила, которая питает фонтан Треви, называется Aqua Virgo.

The poems which follow have been printed from Ivanov's own manuscript. The New Orthography has been adopted throughout, but in all other respects the text reproduces the manuscript with absolute fidelity.

Rome, 1954.

# Сонеты

ВЯЧЕСЛАВ ИВАНОВ

## *ЯВНАЯ ТАЙНА*

Весь исходив свой лабиринт душевный,  
Увидел я по-прежнему светло  
Плывущий в небе Солнца челн полдневный  
И звездное Урании чело.

И пожелал я вспомнить лад напевный  
И славить мир. Но сердце берегло  
Свой талисман, мне вверенный царевой,  
Дар Ариаднин: Имя и Число.

И как таят невесту под фатою,  
Загадочной сокрыл я красотою  
Под ризой ночи светоносный стих,

Пока детей играющих не встретил,  
Поющих звонко славу тайн моих:  
С тех пор пою, как дети, прост и светел.

*СОН*

Как музыка, был сон мой многозвучен  
 И многочувствен, и как жизнь — печален.  
 Плыл челн души вдоль ведомых излучин;  
 У пристаней, у давних, ждал, причален.

С тобой опять я, мнилось, неразлучен —  
 И горькой вновь разлукою ужален;  
 Я слезы лил, былой тоской размучен, —  
 Твой гаснул взор, умилен и прощален.

Вторая жизнь, богаче и жесточе  
 Старинной яви, прожитой беспечно,  
 Мерцала в мути сонного зеркала.

И, пробудясь, я понял: время стало;  
 Ничто не прейдет; все, что было, вечно  
 Содержит дух в родимых недрах Ночи.

*ПОРОГ СОЗНАНИЯ*

Эмилию Метнеру.

Пытливый ум, подобно маяку,  
 Пустынное обводит оком море  
 Ночной души, поющей в слитном хоре  
 Бесплодную разлук своих тоску.

Недостижим горящему зрачку  
 Глухой предел на зыблемом просторе,  
 Откуда, сил в междоусобном споре,  
 Валы бегут к рубежному песку.

А с высоты — туманный луч ласкает  
 И отмели лоснимую постель,  
 И мятежей стихийных колыбель.

Так свет иной, чем разум, проникает  
 За окаем сознанья и в купель  
 Безбрежную свой невод опускает.

*НАГ ВОЗВРАЩУСЬ*

Наг вышел я из чрева  
матери моей и наг возвращусь.

Иов, I, 21.

Не хотим совлечься, но облечься.

II Коринф., V, 4.

Здесь нет ни страха, ни надежд, ни цели,  
Ни жалобы, ни радости, ни смуты:  
Развязаны живых волокон путы,  
И замерли долинны свирели.

Здесь нет могилы, нет и колыбели,  
И нет урочища, и нет минуты:  
Попутным ветром паруса надуты  
Над синим морем без Сирен и мели.

О, плаванье, подобное покою,  
И кругозор из глуби сферы полой!  
Твоя ли, Вечность, взморье то, и всполье?

Пред очесами тихими какою  
Одеждою прикрою стыд мой голый?  
Душевное, замглись мне, подневолье!

*ВНУТРЕННЕЕ НЕБО*

За сферою горящей Серафима  
(О, Человек, когда б в себя ты вник  
И целостным узрел свой вечный лик!) —  
Есть скиния с ковчегом Элоима.

Что в мареве сквозит земного дыма,  
Что Женственным в явлении привык  
Именоват младенческий язык, —  
В раю души — лазурь и ночь Солима.

Когда бы ты почил в голубизне  
Того шатра, увидел бы во сне  
Сидящего средь Града на престоле.

Слепительный не ослепил бы день  
Твоих очей, и не смутила боле  
Мысль: «Он — я сам!» Ты был бы — ночь и сень.

## ПАМЯТИ СКРЯБИНА

## I

Осиротела Музыка. И с ней  
 Поэзия, сестра, осиротела.  
 Потух цветок волшебный, у предела  
 Их смежных царств, и пала ночь темней

На взморие, где новозданных дней  
 Всплывал ковчег таинственный. Истлела  
 От тонких молний духа риза тела,  
 Отдав огонь Источнику огней.

Исторг ли Рок, орлицей зоркой рея,  
 У дерзкого святыню Прометея?  
 Иль персть опламенил язык небес?

Кто скажет: побежден иль победитель,  
 По ком, — немея кладбищем чудес, —  
 Шептаньем лавров плачет Муз обитель?

## 2

Он был из тех певцов (таков-же был Новалис),  
 Что видят в снах себя наследниками лир,  
 Которым на заре веков повиновались  
 Дух, камень, древо, зверь, вода, огонь, эфир.

Но между тем как все потомки признавались,  
 Что поздними гостями вошли на брачный пир, —  
 Заклятья древние, казалось, узнавались  
 Им, им одним опять — и колебали мир.

Так! Все мы помнили — но волил он, и деял.  
 Как зодчий гайн, Хирам, он гайнство посеял,  
 И Море Медное отлил среди двора.

«Не медли!» — звал он Рок; и зову Рок ответил.  
 «Явись!» — молил Сестру — и вот, пришла Сестра.  
 Таким свидетельством пророка Дух отметил.

## НОВОДЕВИЧИЙ МОНАСТЫРЬ

Юрию Верховскому.

Мечты ли власть иль тайный строй сердечный,  
Созвучье молчаливое певцов,  
Иль нежный серп над белизной зубцов  
И встречный звон, и луч заката встречный,

И рдеющий убор многовенечный  
Церквей и башен, или дух отцов  
Двоих путеводили пришлецов  
На кладбище обители приречной, —

Но вечер тот в душе запечатлен.  
Плыл, паруса развев, ковчегом новым  
Храм облачный над спящим Соловьевым;

А за скитом, в ограде внешних стен,  
Как вознесенный жертвенник, молила  
О мире в небе Скрыбина могила.

## ПАРИЖ

Е. С. Кругликовой.

Fluctuat nec mergitur.

Надпись на гербе Парижа.

## I

Обуреваемый Париж! Сколь ты священ,  
Тот видит в облаке, чей дух благоговееет  
Пред жертвенниками, на коих пламенеет  
И плавится Адам в горниле перемен.

То, как иворий, бел, — то черен, как эбен, —  
Над купиной твоей гигантский призрак реет.  
Он числит, борется, святыни, чары деет . . .  
Людовик, Юлиан, Картезий, Сэн-Жермэн —

О, сколько вечных лиц в одном лице блистает  
Мгновенной молнией! — Молэ, Паскаль, Бальзак . . .  
И вдруг Химерою всклубится смольный мрак,

И демон мыслящий звездой затменной тает:  
Крутится буйственней, чем вавилонский столп,  
Безумный легион, как дым, безликих толп.



Кто б ни был ты в миру, — пугливый ли отшельник,  
Ревнивец тайных дум, спесивый ли чудак,  
Алхимик, некромант, или иной маньяк,  
Пророк осмеянный, непризнанный свирельник, —

Перед прыжком с моста в толпе ль снуешь, бездельник,  
Бежишь ли, нелюдим, на царственный чердак, —  
Мелькнет невдалеке и даст собрату знак  
Такой же, как и ты, Лютеции насельник.

Всечеловеческий Париж! В тебе я сам  
Таил свою любовь, таил свои созданья,  
Но знал консьерж мой час стыдливого свиданья;

В мансарде взор стремил сосед мой к небесам;  
Двойник мой в сумерках капеллы, мне заветной,  
Молился пред моей Мадонной неприметной.

### ЯЗЫК

Родная речь певцу земля родная:  
В ней предков неразменный клад лежит,  
И нашептом дубравным ворожит  
Внушенных небом песен мать земная.

Как было древле, — глубь заповедная  
Зачатий ждет, и дух над ней кружит . . .  
И сила недр, полна, в лозе бежит,  
Словесных гроздий сладость наливная.

Прославленная, светится, звеня  
С отгулом сфер, звучащих издалеца,  
Стихия светом умного огня.

И вещей гимн, их свадебная встреча;  
Как уголь, в алмаз замкнувший солнце дня, —  
Творенья духоносного предтеча.

## ЗИМНИЕ СОНЕТЫ

## I

Скрипят полозья. Светел мертвый снег.  
Волшебнo лес торжественный заснежен.  
Лебяжьим пухом свод небес омержен.  
Быстрей оленя туч подлунных бег.

Чу, колокол поет про дальний брег...  
А сон полей безвестен и безбрежен...  
Неслежен путь, и жребий неизбежен:  
Святая ночь, где мне сулишь ночлег?

И вижу я, как в зеркале гадальном,  
Мою семью в убежище недальном,  
В медвяном свете праздничных огней.

И сердце, тайной близостью томимо,  
Ждет искорки средь бора. Но саней  
Прямой полет стремится мимо, мимо.

## II

Незримый вождь глухих моих дорог,  
Я подолгу тобою испытуюем  
В чистилищах глубоких, чей порог  
Мы жребием распутья именуем.

И гордости гасимой вот итог:  
В узилищах с немилым я связуем,  
Пока к тому, кого любить не мог,  
Не подойду с прощеным поцелуем.

Так я бежал суровья зимы:  
Полуденных лобзаний сладострастник,  
Я праздновал с Природой вечный праздник.

Но кладбище сугробов, облак тьмы  
И реквием метели ледовитой  
Со мной сроднил наставник мой сердитый.

## III

Зима души. Косым издалека  
Ее лучом живое солнце греет,  
Она ж в немых сугробах цепенеет,  
И ей поет метелицей тоска.

Охапку дров свалив у камелька,  
Вари пшено, и час тебе довлеет;  
Потом усни, как все дремой коснеет . . .  
Ах, вечности могила глубока!

Оледенел ключ влаги животворной,  
Застыл родник текучего огня:  
О, не ищи под саваном меня!

Свой гроб влачит двойник мой, раб покорный,  
Я ж истинный, плотскому изменяя,  
Творю вдали свой храм нерукотворный.

## IV

Преполовилась темная зима.  
Солнцеворот, что женщины раденьем  
На высотах встречали, долгим бденьем  
Я праздную. Бежит очей дрема.

В лес лавровый холодная тюрьма  
Преобразилась Музы нисхожденьем;  
Он зыблется меж явью и виденьем,  
И в нем стоит небесная сама.

«Неверный!» слышу амброзийный шепот:  
«Слагался ль в песнь твой малодушный ропот?  
Ты остовом ветвистым шелестел.

С останками листвы сухой и бурой,  
Как дуб под снегом; ветер в кустах свистел;  
А я в звездах звала твой взгляд понурый».

## V

Рыскучий волхв, вор лютый, серый волк,  
Тебе во славу стих слагаю зимний!  
Голодный слышу вой. Гостеприимней  
Ко мне земля, людской добрее толк.

Ты ж ненавидим. Знает рабий долг  
Хозяйский пес. Волшебней и взаимней,  
Дельфийский зверь, пророкам Полигимний  
Ты свой, доколь их голос не умолк.

Близ мест, где челн души с безвестных взморий  
Причалил, и судьбам я вверен был,  
Стоит на страже волчий вождь, Егорий.

Протяжно там твой полк, шамана, выл;  
И с детства мне понятен зов унылый  
Бездомного огня в степи застылой.

## VI

Ночь новолунья. А мороз, лютей  
Медведицы, певцу надежд ответил,  
Что стуж ущерб он с Музой рано встретил,  
Беспечных легковернее детей.

Не сиротеет вера без вестей;  
Немолчным дух обетованьем светел,  
И в час ночной, чу, возглашает петел  
Весну, всех весен краше и святей.

Звук оный трубный, тот, что отворяет  
Последние затворы зимних врат,  
Твой хриплый гимн, вождь утра, предваряет.

И, полночь пережившее утрат,  
Биеньем тайным сердце ускоряет  
Любимых на лицо земли возврат.

## VII

Как месячно и бело на дорогах,  
 Что смертной тенью мерит мой двойник,  
 Меж тем как сам я, тайный ученик,  
 Дивясь, брожу в Изидиных чертогах.

И мнится, здешний я лежу на дрогах,  
 Уставя к небу мертвый, острый лик:  
 И черных копей водит проводник  
 Пустынных гор в оснеженных отрогах.

И, движась рядом, поезд теневой  
 По белизне проходит снеговой;  
 Не вычерчен из мрака лишь вожатый,

Как будто, сквозь него струясь, луна  
 Лучи слила с зарею розоватой,  
 И правит путь Пресветлая Жена.

## VIII

Худую кровлю треплет ветер, и гулок  
 Железа лязг и стон из полутьмы.  
 Пустырь окрест под пеленой зимы,  
 И кладбище сугробов переулок.

Час неурочный полночь для прогулок  
 По городу, где, мнится, дух чумы  
 Прошел, и жизнь пустой своей тюрьмы  
 В потайный схоронилась закоулок.

До хижины я ноги доволок,  
 Сквозь утлые чьи стены дует вьюга,  
 Но где укрыт от стужи уголок.

Тепло в черте магического круга;  
 На очаге клокочет котелок,  
 И светит Агни, как улыбка друга.

## IX

Твое именованье — Сиротство,  
Зима, Зима! Твой скорбный строй — унылость.  
Удел — богов глухонемых немилость.  
Твой лик — с устами сжатыми вдовство.

Там, в вышних ночи, славы торжество,  
Превыспренних бесплотных легкокрылость.  
Безвестье тут, беспамятство, застылость, —  
А в недрах — Солнца, Солнца рождество!

Меж пальцев алавастровых лампада  
Психеи зябкой теплется едва.  
Алмазами играет синева.

Грозь, висит хрустальная громада.  
Под кров спасайся, где трещат дрова,  
Жизнь темная, от звездных копий хлада!

## X

Бездомных, Боже приюти! Нора  
Потребна земнородным, и берлога  
Глубокая. В тепло глухого лога  
И зверя гонит зимняя пора.

Не гордых сил привольная игра, —  
За огонек востепленный тревога  
В себе и в милом ближнем — столь убога  
Жизнь и любовь. Но все душа бодра.

Согрето тело пламенем крылатым,  
Руном одето мягким и косматым,  
В зверином лике весел человек, —

Скользит на лыжах, правит бег олений.  
Кто искру высек, — сам себя рассек  
На плоть и дух — два мира вожделений.

## XI

Далече ухнет в поле ветр ночной  
 И теплым вихрем, буйный, налетает:  
 Не с островов ли гость, где обитает  
 На запад солнца взятых сонм родной?

Довременной бушует он весной,  
 Острог зимы в его дыханьи гает.  
 И стóрожким копытом конь пытается  
 На тонкой переправе лед речной.

Февральския плывут в созвездьях Рыбы,  
 Могильные лучом пронзают глыбы,  
 Волнуют притяженьем область душ.

Закон их своенравен, свычай шальный:  
 Вчера все стыло в злобе лютых стуж, —  
 Синее в пятнах дол наутро тальи.

## XII

То жизнь — иль сон предутренний, когда  
 Свежеет воздух, остужая ложе,  
 Озноб крылатый крадется по коже  
 И строит сновиденье царство льда?

Обманчива явлений череда:  
 Где морок, где существенность, о Боже?  
 И явь и греза — не одно ль и то же?  
 Ты — бытие; но нет к Тебе следа.

Любовь — не призрак лживый: верю, чаю!..  
 Но и в мечтанье сонном я люблю,  
 Дрожу за милых, стражду, жду, встречаю...

В ночь зимнюю пасхальный звон ловлю,  
 Стучусь в гроба и мертвых тороплю,  
 Пока себя в гробу не примечаю.

*DE PROFUNDIS AMAVI*

## I

О сновиденье жизни, долгий морок  
К чему ты примечталось? И к чему  
Я ближнему примнился моему?  
К добру ли? К лиху ль? Расточися, ворог!

Воскресни Бог!.. Уже давно не дорог  
Очам узор, хитро заткавший тьму.  
Что ткач был я, в последний срок пойму;  
Судье: «Ты прав» — скажу без оговорок.

Дремучей плоти голод и пожар  
Духовный свет мне застил навожденьем,  
Подобным куреву восточных чар.

Их ядовитый я вдыхал угар, —  
Но жив любви во мрак мой нисхожденьем:  
Любить из преисподней был мой дар.

## II

Когда бы, волю Отчую боря,  
Я не ушел, любовью обаянный  
К душе, Творцом в творенье изливающей,  
За ней скитаться без поводыря:

О блудном сыне притчу повторя  
И болью нег, и скорбью покаянной,  
Над разрушеньем персти изваянной  
Я не рыдал бы, тварь боготворя...

О жизни сон, болезненный и бредный!  
Приснись ты вновь, — я сердце бы замкнул,  
Как царь-отец Данаю, в замок медный:

Чтоб милый взор в тайник не заглянул —  
И пламень неба, свод расплавя, дивней  
Свергался золотом безликих ливней.



## III

Прилип огнем снедающий хитон;  
Кентавра кровь — как лавы ток по жилам  
Геракловым. Уж язвины могилам  
Подобятся. Деревья мечет он —

В костер . . . И вихрь багряных похорон  
Ползучий яд крылатым тушит пылом.  
Так золото очищено горнилом . . .  
Земной любви не тот же ли закон?

Сплетясь, — как дуб с омелой чужеядной, —  
Со Страстию глухонемой и жадной,  
Убийцу в ней вдруг узнает она.

Живая плоть бежит от плоти хладной,  
И надвое, что было плоть одна,  
Рассекла Смерть секирой беспощадной.

## IV

Какие, месяц, юный жнец, дары  
Ты мне сулишь серпом, сверкнувшим справа?  
Персей ли ты, чья быстрая расправа  
Снесла наотмашь голову Мары?

Скоси мне жизнь, гонец благой поры!  
Дабы воскресла, целостна и здрава,  
Душа в тот мир, где страстная отрава  
Ее не тмила огненной игры.

Там, не томясь, блаженная любила;  
Змея-Вина беспечной той любви  
Не жалила, и Кара не губила.

Но смертью в теле, страстию в крови  
Прозябла персть. И долу, друг вечерний,  
Нет игл острее Любви диких терний!

## V

Надежд нестройный хор, из голосов  
Младенческих и старческих, из встречных  
Желаний-однодневок и сердечных  
Заветных умыслов, — как шум лесов

И в нем рогá и лай проворных псов, —  
Доносится до крыши остроконечных  
Той башни, где, меж камней вековечных,  
Мне ощутимей листопад часов.

Там похоронной Вечности мерилом  
Земные сроки мерить роковой  
Курантов древних однозвучный бой.

Всечасно там учусь прощаться с милым:  
Перст медленный свершит урочный круг, —  
И молот по́ сердцу ударит вдруг.

## VI

Когда б я жил в Капрейской голубой  
Подводным озарением пещере,  
Чье устье, верен вековечной мере,  
То приоткроет, то замкнет прибой:

Умильною взмолилась бы мольбой,  
Как ласточка, душа, виясь у двери,  
К лазурным Нерейдам, чтобы в сфере  
Иной лазури снова быть собой.

Так жизнь меня пленила, чаровница,  
Крылатого. Крылам любви тесна  
Небесных сводов синяя темница.

С главы стяхнуть я силюсь волны сна:  
Любимая больного тихо будит  
И жаркий лоб дыханьем тонким студит.

## VII

О, сердце, — встарь гостеприимный стан,  
 Шатер широкий на лугу цветистом,  
 Огней веселье в сумраке душистом,  
 Кочующий дурбар волшебных стран,

Где всех царевич, белый чей тюрбан  
 Отличен непорочным аметистом,  
 Приветствует нарцисса даром чистым  
 И ласковою речью: «Друг, ты зван» —

Как ты любовь спасло? Увы, ты ныне  
 В железном, крепко скованном тыну  
 Затвор, подобный башенной твердыне.

С ее зубцов на пир у стен взгляну —  
 И снова духом в Божией пустыне  
 За тихими созвездьями тону.

## VIII

Светило дня сияющей печатью  
 Скрепляет в небе приговор судеб:  
 И то, что колос было, стало хлеб;  
 Законом то, что было благодатью.

И, Фебову послушное заклатью,  
 Возможное, как тень, бежит в Эреб;  
 Лишь нужное для роковых потреб  
 Пощажено лучей копьистой ратью.

Но духу чужд, враждебен этот суд, —  
 И крылья Памяти меня несут  
 В край душ, вослед несбыточной Надежде.

Там обнимаю мертвую Любовь,  
 И в части сердца, трепетные прежде,  
 Лью жарких жил остаточную кровь.

## IX

Из глубины Тебя любил я, Боже,  
Сквозь бред земных пристрастий и страстей.  
Меня томил Ты долго без вестей,  
Но не был мне никто Тебя дороже.

Когда лобзал любимую, я ложе  
С Тобой делил. Приветствуя гостей,  
Тебя встречал. И чем Тебя святей  
Я чтил, тем взор Твой в дух вперялся строже.

Так не ревнуй же! . . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
  
. . . . .  
. . . . .  
. . . . .

## РИМСКИЕ СОНЕТЫ

## I

Вновь арок древних верный пилигрим,  
 В мой поздний час вечерним 'Ave Roma'  
 Приветствую как свод родного дома,  
 Тебя, скитаний пристань, вечный Рим.

Мы Трою предков пламени дарим;  
 Дробятся оси колесниц меж грома  
 И фурий мирового ипподрома:  
 Ты, царь путей, глядишь, как мы горим.

И ты пылал и восставал из пепла,  
 И памятливая голубизна  
 Твоих небес глубоких не ослепла.

И помнит в ласке золотого сна,  
 Твой вратарь кипарис, как Троя крепла,  
 Когда лежала Троя сожжена.

## II

Держа коней строптивых под-узды,  
 Могучи пылом солнечной отваги  
 И наготово олимпийской наги,  
 Вперед ступили братья-близнецы.

Соратники Квиритов и гонцы  
 С полей победы, у Ютурнской влаги,  
 Неузнаны, явились (помнят саги)  
 На стогнах Рима боги-пришлецы.

И в нем остались до скончины мира.  
 И юношей огромных два кумира  
 Не сдвинулись тысячелетья с мест.

И там стоят, где стали изначала —  
 Шести холмам, синеющим окрест,  
 Светить звездой с вершины Квиринала.

## III

Пел Пиндар, лебедь: «Нет под солнцем блага  
Воды милей». Бежит по жилам Рима,  
Склоненьем акведуков с гор гонима,  
Издравле родников счастливых влага.

То плещет звонко в кладязь саркофага;  
То бьет в лазурь столбом и вдаль, дробима,  
Прохладу зыблет; то, неукротима,  
Потоки рушит с мраморного прага.

Ее журчаньем узкий переулок  
Волшебнo оживлен; и хороводы  
Окрест ее ведут морские боги:

Резец собрал их. Сонные чертоги  
Пустынно внемлют, как играют воды,  
И сладостно во мгле их голос гулок.

## IV

Окаменев под чарами журчанья  
Бегущих струй за полные края,  
Лежит полу-затоплена ладья;  
К ней девушек с цветами шлет Кампанья.

И лестница, переступая зданья,  
Широкий путь узорами двоя,  
Несет в лазурь двух башен острия  
И обелиск над Площадью ди-Спанья.

Люблю домов оранжевый загар  
И людные меж старых стен теснины  
И шорох пальм на ней в полдневный жар;

А ночью темной вздохи каватины  
И под аккорды бархатных гитар  
Бродячей стрекотанье маңдолины.

## V

Двустворку на хвостах клубок дельфиний  
 Разверстой вынес; в ней растет Тритон,  
 Трубит в улитку; но не зычный тон,  
 Струя лучом пронзает воздух синий.

Средь зноя плит, зовущих облак пиний,  
 Как зелен мха на демоне хитон!  
 С природой схож резца старинный сон  
 Стихийною причудливостью линий.

Бернини, — снова наш, — твоей игрой  
 Я веселюсь, от Четырех Фонтанов  
 Бредя на Пинчю памятной горой,

Где в келью Гоголя входил Иванов,  
 Где Пиранези огненной иглой  
 Пел Рима грусть и зодчество Титанов.

## VI

Через плечо слагая черепах,  
 Горбатых пленниц, на мель плоской вазы,  
 Где брызжут на воле водолазы,  
 Забыв, неповоротливые, страх, —

Танцуют отроки на головах  
 Курносых чудищ. Дивны их проказы:  
 Под их пятой уроды пучеглазы  
 Из круглой пасти прыщут водный прах.

Их четверо резвятся на дельфинах.  
 На бронзовых то голенях, то спинах  
 Лоснится дня зелено-зыбкий смех.

И в этой неге лени и приволий  
 Твоих ловлю я праздничных утех,  
 Твоих, Лоренцо, эхо меланхолий.

## VII

Спит водоем осенний, окроплен  
Багрянцем нищим царственных отречий.  
Средь мхов и скал, муж со змеей, Асклепий,  
Под аркою глядит на красный клен.

И синий свод, как бронзой, окаймлен  
Убранством сумрачных великолепий  
Листвы, на коей не коснели цепи  
Мертвящих стуж, ни снежных блеск пелен.

Взирают так, с улыбкою печальной,  
Блаженные на нас, как на платан  
Увядший солнце. Плещет звон хрустальный:

Струя к лучу стремится зыбучий стан.  
И в глади опрокинуты зеркальной  
Асклепий, клен, и небо, и фонтан.

## VIII

Весть мощных вод и в веяньи прохлады  
Послышится, и в их растущем реве.  
Иди на гул: раздвинутся громады,  
Сверкнет царица водометов, Треви.

Сребром с палат посыплются каскады;  
Морские кони прынут в светлом гневе;  
Из скал богини выйдут, гостье рады,  
И сам Нептун навстречу Влаге-Деве.

О, сколько раз, беглец невольный Рима,  
С молитвой о возврате в час потребный  
Я за плечо бросал в тебя монеты!

Свершались договорные обеты:  
Счастливого, как днесь, фонтан волшебный,  
Ты возвращал святыням пилигрима.



## IX

Пью медленно медвяный солнца свет,  
Густеющий, как долу звон прощальный;  
И светел дух печалью беспечальной,  
Весь полнота, какой названья нет.

Не медом ли воскресших полных лет  
Он напоен, сей кубок Дня венчальный?  
Не Вечность ли свой перстень обручальный  
Простерла Дню за гранью зримых мет?

Зеркальному подобна морю слава  
Огнистого небесного расплава,  
Где тает диск и тонет исполин.

Ослепшими перстами луч ощупал  
Верх пинии, и глаз потух. Один,  
На золоте круглится синий Купол.

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