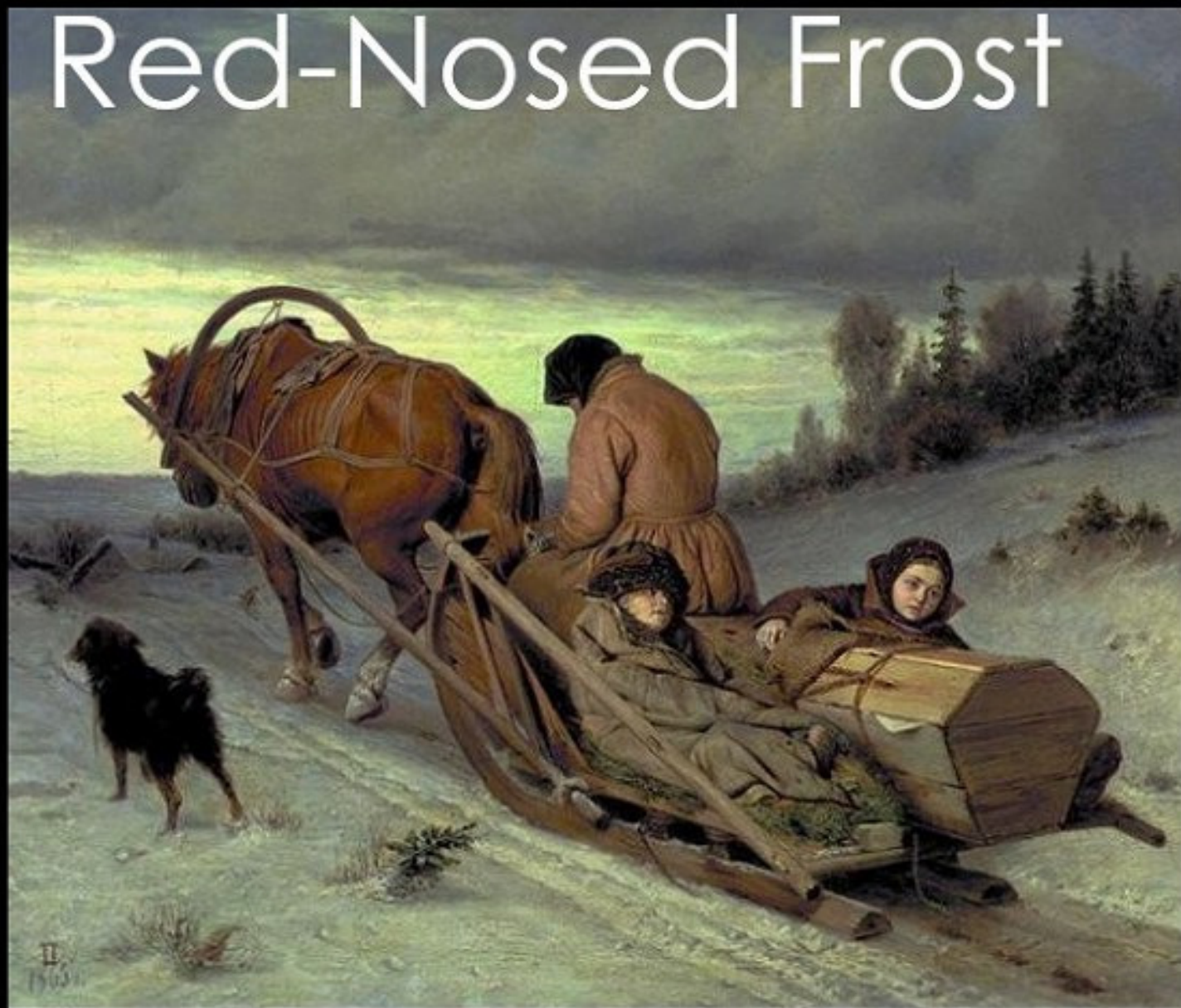


# Nekrasov's

# Red-Nosed Frost



Translation and Notes

by Colin John Holcombe

Ocaso Press 2020

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## Introduction: Nikoláy Nekrásov (1821-77)

Nekrásov was controversial from the first. No one more castigated the wealthy classes for their neglect of the Russian peasantry than this celebrated author of savage civic poetry, but Nekrásov himself, who had known extreme poverty in his early years, enjoyed a far from edifying existence, spending freely on drink, gambling, expensive cooks and even more expensive mistresses. Nekrásov was indeed an editor of genius, getting the best from the many famous contributors to his magazines, and shepherding their work through censorship, but he was also a shrewd entrepreneur disliked for his hardnosed and sometimes questionable business dealings. Turgénev and Tolstóy were repelled by the prosaic nature of Nekrásov's poetry, but that very nature was praised by his advocates for its unflinching realism despite the indifferent verse, or — equally wrong-headedly — for its lyricism despite the unvarying vengeance and grief in its themes.

Nekrásov's funeral in 1877 was a national occasion, where his name was enthusiastically placed next to Púshkin's, or even above Púshkin's, but today his poetry is probably little known outside Russia. New translations of Púshkin, Blok, Pasternák and host of famous Russian poets appear almost annually, but Nekrásov's masterpiece, *Red-Nosed Frost*, was last translated in its entirety back in 1929. Nekrásov may well be accepted as Russia's greatest civic poet of the nineteenth century, but exactly what makes that excellence has been disputed by everyone, from

Nekrásov's contemporaries through Marxist critics to our present day literary theorists.

Opting for a literary rather than a military career, Nikoláy Alexéyevich Nekrásov attempted to enrol at St. Petersburg University, which prompted his bullying squire of a father to stop the allowance. For three years, Nekrásov lived in direst poverty, experiencing at first hand what was to be a constant theme of his work: the sufferings of Russia's oppressed classes. But by 1847, through an astonishing amount of hack journalism, commercial acumen and genuine critical taste, Nekrásov had emerged as the principal publisher of a new literary school, which in time brought out all the leading names of Russian literature in the mid-to-later nineteenth century. His own verse improved, and found ardent support in Belínsky and other leading critics. Surviving the hard times of reaction, the *Sovreménnik* became the rallying ground of the extreme left, until eventually closed down in the panic that followed the first attempt on Alexander II's life. Two years later, Nekrásov took over the *Otéchestvennye zapíski*, which he turned into the most radical journal in the country until his death in 1877. {4}

Nekrásov's work is prolific but very mixed. It was not so much lapses of taste, said his detractors, but of no taste at all, of not being concerned with such matters. Nekrásov has none of the tact, balance and luminous sense of limits that inform the work of Púshkin, Turgénev and Tyútchev, and the dangerous facility he acquired in his years of hack

journalism allowed him to mechanically turn out verse on anything he pleased, as and when the need came to him. What most drove him to hold forth were the monstrous sufferings of the poor, with whom — his own life-style notwithstanding — he genuinely sympathised. He identified personally with his subjects, moreover, and almost alone among the great Russian poets, could enter into the peasant's hopes, sufferings and rough good humour. Many of his pieces have the genuine air of folksongs. At his best, Nekrásov is incomparable, writing with intense humanity, often with biting satire and savage invective. He was also able to incorporate colloquialisms and slang into his verse, compose in loose ternary measures, and carry off such incongruous matters quite naturally. Whatever the faults, there are poems that only Nekrásov could have produced: *The Pedlars, Who Can Be Happy in Russia?* and *Red-Nosed Frost*.

## Red-Nosed Frost

Red-Nosed Frost, published in 1863, was the first of Nekrásov's masterpieces, and the first to be translated into English. The poem is prefaced by a dedication to Nekrásov's sister, and divided into two parts. The first is entitled *The Death of a Peasant*, and describes (with some flashbacks) the death and burial of the peasant Prokel, his parents and wife Dar'ya attending. The second is entitled *Red-Nosed Frost*, and describes the death of Dar'ya, again with flashbacks.

The poem is written in ternary measures: amphibrachic trimeters for the most part, but dactylic trimeters for a central section between lines 559 and 835 inclusive. I have replaced both measures by iambic verse with a similar number of syllables, and substituted masculine rhymes for feminine ones. In other respects — line length and rhyme schemes — the translation faithfully follows the Russian.

Details of a more scholarly nature are given in the extensive Appendix.



## Russian Text and Formal Translation

Посвящаю моей сестре  
Анне Алексеевне

Ты опять упрекнула меня,  
Что я с музой моей раздружился,  
Что заботам текущего дня  
И забавам его подчинился.

5. Для житейских расчетов и чар  
Не расстался б я с музой моею,  
Но бог весть, не погас ли тот дар,  
Что, бывало, дружил меня с нею?

Но не брат еще людям поэт,  
10. И тернист его путь, и непрочен,  
Я умел не бояться клевет,  
Не был ими я сам озабочен;

Но я знал, чье во мраке ночном  
Надрывалось сердце с печали,  
15. И на чью они грудь упали свинцом,  
И кому они жизнь отравляли.

И пускай они мимо прошли,  
Надо мною ходившие грозы,  
Знаю я, чьи молитвы и слезы  
20. Роковую стрелу отвели...

Да и время ушло,— я устал...  
Пусть я не был бойцом без упрека,  
Но я силы в себе признавал,  
Я во многое верил глубоко,

Dedicated to my sister  
Anna Alexeyevna

My Muse, you tell me once again,  
is too much taken as a friend,  
as though the constant cares of men  
were made for entertainment's end.

5. It's true, for charm and profit I  
will not be parted from my Muse:  
if gifts, God knows, are not to die,  
it is those friendships I must use.

Can't poet take the brother's way  
10. though faint and thorny be the track?  
I fear no harsh things people say:  
it's not my person they attack.

I know night's darkness, how is spread  
the sadness that afflicts my heart,  
15. and on whose breast they weigh as lead,  
and who is poisoned by their part.

I let them pass me by, as went  
the tempests of long years ago.  
It is by prayers and tears, I know,  
20. that fateful arrow stays unshot.

Yes, time goes on, and I was tired,  
nor always fought too honourably,  
but was by deeper truth inspired,  
by knowing strength would come to me.

25. А теперь — мне пора умирать...  
Не затем же пускаться в дорогу,  
Чтобы в любящем сердце опять  
Пробудить роковую тревогу...

Присмирившую музу мою  
30. Я и сам неохотно ласкаю...  
Я последнюю песню пою  
Для тебя — и тебе посвящаю.

Но не будет она веселей,  
Будет много печальнее прежней,  
35. Потому что на сердце темней  
И в грядущем еще безнадежней...

Буря воеет в саду, буря ломится в дом,  
Я боюсь, чтоб она не сломила  
Старый дуб, что посажен отцом,  
40. И ту иву, что мать посадила,

Эту иву, которую ты  
С нашей участью странно связала,  
На которой поблекли листья  
В ночь, как бедная мать умирала...

45. И дрожит и пестреет окно...  
Чу! как крупные градины скачут!  
Милый друг, поняла ты давно —  
48. Здесь одни только камни не плачут...

25. Perhaps it's time for me to go,  
or not to take this road again,  
nor have the loving heart bestow  
its gifts on what was fatal then.

Yet for that Muse, my talents bring  
30. no vanity to what I do:  
if this be last of songs I sing,  
I dedicate it here to you.

In this there's little joy, I fear,  
but only sadnesses that fill  
35. the heart, which darkening, year by year,  
grows the more despondent still.

The raging storm that howled outside  
has broken through, and would destroy  
the planted oak, our father's pride,  
40. and willow that was mother's joy.

Our fate is in that willow tree,  
to which we two are strangely tied:  
how lifeless were those leaves to be  
the night when our poor mother died.

45. How hard the hail that storm would send,  
which rattled on the window pane:  
how long ago that was, my friend:  
wild griefs that only stones constrain.

## Часть первая: СМЕРТЬ КРЕСТЬЯНИНА

### I

Савраска увяз в половине сугроба,—  
50. Две пары промерзлых лаптей  
Да угол рогожей покрытого гроба  
Торчат из убогих дровней.

Старуха, в больших рукавицах,  
Савраску сошла понукать.  
55. Сосульки у ней на ресницах,  
С морозу — должно полагать.

### II

Привычная дума поэта  
Вперед забежать ей спешит:  
Как саваном, снегом одета,  
60. Избушка в деревне стоит,

В избушке — теленок в подклети,  
Мертвец на скамье у окна;  
Шумят его глупые дети,  
Тихонько рыдает жена.

65. Сшивая проворной иголкой  
На саван куски полотна,  
Как дождь, зарядивший надолго,  
Негромко рыдает она.

## Part One: DEATH OF A PEASANT

### I

A roan mare stuck there in the snow:  
50. two pairs of feet in bast-cold shoes  
and sled with cloth-wrapped coffin show  
what wretched things she has to use.

The woman's old, large mittened, tries  
to clamber down and urge on horse.  
55. The icicles that rim her eyes  
disclose that frost is out in force.

### II

With that sketched in, as poets may,  
we change the scene and back may go  
to when both hut and village lay  
60. beneath a heavy pall of snow.

A hut: whose corner holds a calf,  
the bench a corpse, not yet interred.  
Around it thoughtless children laugh:  
a woman's sobs are barely heard.

65. Her needle tacks a funeral shroud  
from fabric scraps she has to spare.  
Like rain in prospect, and unbowed,  
unnoticed is her weeping there.

### III

Три тяжкие доли имела судьба,  
70. И первая доля: с рабом повенчаться,  
Вторая — быть матерью сына раба,  
А третья — до гроба рабу покоряться,

И все эти грозные доли легли  
На женщину русской земли.

75. Века протекали — все к счастью стремилось,  
Все в мире по нескольку раз изменилось,

Одну только бог изменить забывал  
Суровую долю крестьянки.  
И все мы согласны, что тип измельчал  
80. Красивой и мощной славянки.

Случайная жертва судьбы!  
Ты глухо, незримо страдала,  
Ты свету кровавой борьбы  
И жалоб своих не вверяла,—

85. Но мне ты их скажешь, мой друг!  
Ты с детства со мною знакома.  
Ты вся — воплощенный испуг,  
Ты вся — вековая истома!

Тот сердца в груди не носил,  
Кто слез над тобою не лил!

### III

To three hard fates their futures run:

70. the first be husband to a slave,  
the second mother such a one,  
the third be one until the grave.

And all these heavy lots from birth  
have women born of Russian earth.

75. The ages may correct their crimes,  
the world has altered many times,

but God forgot to change but one:  
the harshness of a peasant's lot.  
Decayed their beauty, strength undone:  
80. such is the future Slavs have got.

Unfair descendent of that fate  
that you have borne unseen, unheard:  
a conflict from that desperate strait,  
yet of that grievance not a word.

85. But you will tell me all at last —  
who were my friend from childhood years —  
the long fatigue of centuries past,  
today's enactments of your fears:

And he would lack a living heart  
90. who shed no tears for your sad part.



## IV

Однако же речь о крестьянке  
Затеяли мы, чтоб сказать,  
Что тип величавой славянки  
Возможно и ныне сыскать.

95. Есть женщины в русских селеньях  
С спокойною важностью лиц,  
С красивой силой в движеньях,  
С походкой, со взглядом цариц,—

Их разве слепой не заметит,  
100. А зрячий о них говорит:  
«Пройдет — словно солнце осветит!  
Посмотрит — рублем подарит!»

Идут они той же дорогой,  
Какой весь народ наш идет,  
105. Но грязь обстановки убогой  
К ним словно не липнет. Цветет

Красавица, миру на диво,  
Румяна, стройна, высока,  
Во всякой одежде красива,  
110. Ко всякой работе ловка.

И голод и холод выносит,  
Всегда терпелива, ровна...  
Я видывал, как она косит:  
Что взмах — то готова копна!

## IV

The peasant woman, to return  
to what we had begun to say,  
that stately Slav we may discern  
a shadow of, at least, today.

95. Examples in odd places reach  
a calm solemnity, serene  
in strength and beauty, each  
with looks and stature of a queen.

No doubt the blind to them can't say  
100. but those discerning so confess,  
as sun will brighten any day,  
and ruble bring its happiness.

They walk as others walk, their stance  
is nothing strange, but if their hem  
105. is mired by fault or circumstance  
no part of it adheres to them.

So is their beauty everywhere,  
in height and bearing, rosy hue:  
becoming are the clothes they wear,  
110. and skilled is everything they do.

Long cold and hunger they survive,  
their calm and balance serves its term.  
How simply they will swing the scythe  
and stack the haycock straight and firm.

115. Платок у ней на ухо сбился,  
Того гляди косы падут.  
Какой-то парнек изловчился  
И кверху подбросил их, шут!

Тяжелые русые косы  
120. Упали на смуглую грудь,  
Покрыли ей ноженьки босы,  
Мешают крестьянке взглянуть.

Она отвела их руками,  
На парня сердито глядит.  
125. Лицо величаво, как в раме,  
Смущеньем и гневом горит...

По будням не любит безделья.  
Зато вам ее не узнать,  
Как сгонит улыбка веселья  
130. С лица трудовую печать.

Такого сердечного смеха,  
И песни, и пляски такой  
За деньги не купишь. «Утеха!»  
Твердят мужики меж собой.

135. В игре ее конный не словит,  
В беде — не сробеет,— спасет;  
Коня на скаку остановит,  
В горящую избу войдет!

115. A kerchief tied about the ear  
will hold the hair up as a rule,  
but irresistible and dear  
to lads who like to play the fool.

And so they loose it: on the breast  
120. to fall a flood of flaxen hair,  
which, tumbling on, will come to rest  
to leave no legs or ankle bare.

Annoyed at this, she'll toss it back  
and at the lad direct a gaze  
125. that's framed as haughty, an attack  
where shame and indignation blaze.

The workdays see no idleness,  
you'll hardly recognize the face:  
that warm, rich smile has even less  
130. of toil about its easy grace.

Laughing too, how joyfully  
she sings and dances for herself,  
the peasants working round agree  
no coin can purchase such a wealth.

135. On horse she's one you'll never catch,  
in any rescue boldly acts:  
she'll rush beneath a burning thatch,  
stop bolting horse dead in its tracks.

Красивые, ровные зубы,  
140. Что крупные перлы, у ней,  
Но строго румяные губы  
Хранят их красу от людей —

Она улыбается редко...  
Ей некогда лясы точить,  
145. У ней не решится соседка  
Ухвата, горшка попросить;

Не жалок ей нищий убогий —  
Вольно ж без работы гулять!  
Лежит на ней дельности строгой  
150. И внутренней силы печать.

В ней ясно и крепко сознание,  
Что все их спасенье в труде,  
И труд ей несет воздаянье:  
Семейство не бьется в нужде,

155. Всегда у них теплая хата,  
Хлеб выпечен, вкусен квасок,  
Здоровы и сыты ребята,  
На праздник есть лишний кусок.

Идет эта баба к обедне  
160. Пред всею семьей впереди:  
Сидит, как на стуле, двухлетний  
Ребенок у ней на груди,

Рядком шестилетнего сына  
Нарядная матка ведет...  
165. И по сердцу эта картина  
Всем любящим русский народ!

Her teeth are regular and large,  
140. well shaped and of a pearly white,  
but here the ruby lips take charge  
and keep them out of general sight.

She rarely has the wish to smile,  
for jokes has even less to spare,  
145. and even neighbour can't beguile  
the loan of pot or cooking ware.

She has no pity for the poor  
who will not tramp about for work.  
Practical, her very core  
150. resides in tasks she will not shirk.

In that clear head is consciousness  
that work itself will make them free;  
it brings to all its own largesse  
and keeps them safe from penury.

155. To have a warm roof overhead,  
good bread to eat, kvass that's sweet,  
strong, healthy children, all well fed,  
where feast days bring an extra treat.

From work it's off to mass she goes,  
160. with family all led to prayer,  
and on her sturdy breast will doze  
the two year old that's carried there.

And by her side, the six-year old,  
who walks, well dressed and close to hand:  
165. a pleasing scene that's warmly told  
by all who love our Russian land.

V

И ты красотой дивила,  
Была и ловка, и сильна,  
Но горе тебя иссушило,  
170. Уснувшего Прокла жена!

Горда ты — ты плакать не хочешь,  
Крепишься, но холст гробовой  
Слезами невольно ты мочишь,  
Сшивая проворной иглой.

175. Слеза за слезой упадает  
На быстрые руки твои.  
Так колос беззвучно роняет  
Созревшие зерна свои...

V

Great beauty, too, was yours, who were  
both skilled and strongly full of life,  
but grief now casts its shade on her,  
170. who once was Prokel's dearest wife.

You're proud and do not choose to weep,  
you're strong, but on the cloth are bowed:  
involuntary, the tears that keep  
on dropping on that new-stitched shroud.

175. Tear on tear, they also drop  
upon the needle-plying hand,  
as silent as the rye's own crop  
of seeds is scattered on the land



## VI

В селе, за четыре версты,  
180. У церкви, где ветер шатает  
Подбитые бурей кресты,  
Местечко старик выбирает;

Устал он, работа трудна,  
Тут тоже сноровка нужна —

185. Чтоб крест было видно с дороги,  
Чтоб солнце играло кругом.  
В снегу до колен его ноги,  
В руках его заступ и лом,

Вся в инее шапка большая,  
190. Усы, борода в серебре.  
Недвижно стоит, размышляя,  
Старик на высоком бугре.

Решился. Крестом обозначил,  
Где будет могилу копать,  
195. Крестом осенился и начал  
Лопатою снег разгребать.

Иные приемы тут были,  
Кладбище не то, что поля:  
Из снегу кресты выходили,  
200. Крестами ложилась земля.

## VI

A village, here four versts away,  
180. and church, where wind-felled crosses rest:  
an old man searches where to lay  
out burial spot that's for the best.

The task is difficult: he's tired,  
and there is also skill required.

185. The cross should be where traveller sees  
it from the road, where sunlight played.  
The snow comes fully to his knees:  
his hands hold crowbar and a spade.

His large, rough cap is rimmed with frost:  
190. his beard and moustache silvered too.  
He stands upon a mound as lost  
in thought upon what place would do.

He's now decided, with a cross he marks  
the boundaries where the grave will go.  
195. Then, having crossed himself, embarks  
with spade to shovel off the snow.

For this is not an empty field,  
and other bodies lie around.  
Their crosses stick out, or, concealed,  
200. are thick beneath the snowy ground.

Согнув свою старую спину,  
Он долго, прилежно копал,  
И желтую мерзлую глину  
Тотчас же снежок застилал.

205. Ворона к нему подлетела,  
Потыкала носом, прошла:  
Земля как железо звенела —  
Ворона ни с чем убралась...

Могила на славу готова,—  
210. «Не мне б эту яму копать!  
(У старого вырвалось слово.)  
Не Проклу бы в ней почивать,

Не Проклу!..» Старик оступился,  
Из рук его выскользнул лом  
215. И в белую яму скатился,  
Старик его вынул с трудом.

Пошел... по дороге шагает...  
Нет солнца, луна не взошла...  
Как будто весь мир умирает:  
220. Затишье, снежок, полумгла...

He bends his tired old back: today  
he labours long and hard, each blow  
reveals a frozen yellow clay  
but glimpsed beneath fast falling snow.

205. A crow flew up and at his nose  
pecked warily and looked about:  
The frozen earth rang hard with blows:  
it had to turn away with nowt.

The grave stood open to his gaze.  
210. « It's not for me to find what's best  
(the old man uttered some such phrase)  
where Prokel has his final rest.

Not Prokel. » Startled at the thought,  
he fumbled with the crowbar, when  
215. it fell into the hole. He fought  
long years to haul it out again.

Gone . . . in wandering down the road,  
no sun or moon to light the way,  
his whole wide world had died, or slowed  
220. to these thick drifts, not night, not day.

## VII

В овраге, у речки Желтухи,  
Старик свою бабу нагнал  
И тихо спросил у старухи:  
«Хорош ли гробок-то попал?»

225. Уста ее чуть прошептали  
В ответ старику: «Ничего».  
Потом они оба молчали,  
И дровни так тихо бежали,  
Как будто боялись чего...

230. Деревня еще не открылась,  
А близко — мелькает огонь.  
Старуха крестом осенилась,  
Шарахнулся в сторону конь,—

Без шапки, с ногами босыми,  
235. С большим заостренным колом,  
Внезапно предстал перед ними  
Старинный знакомец Пахом.

Прикрыты рубахою женской,  
Звенели вериги на нем;  
240. Постукал дурак деревенский  
В морозную землю колом,

## VII

Zeltukha's brook: at its ravine,  
the old man had his wife in sight.  
He quietly asked her what she'd seen.  
«The coffin, does it look alright? »

225. She barely whispered. All she said  
or murmured was . . . « Sufficient for . . . »  
They both fell silent. The wood-sledge sped  
then quietly on as if some dread  
had hindered them from saying more.

230. Then, all at once, a fire was near,  
although no village was in sight.  
The woman crossed herself in fear;  
the horse near bolted out of fright.

Here, lacking trousers or a hat,  
235. but brandishing a staff of wood,  
at home in his own habitat,  
their old acquaintance, Pakhom, stood.

He wore a woman's old chemise  
and chains, this village lunatic.  
240. He waved the staff: the woman sees  
him strike the frozen earth with it.

Потом помычал сердобольно,  
Вздохнул и сказал: «Не беда!  
На вас он работал довольно,  
245. И ваша пришла череда!

Мать сыну-то гроб покупала,  
Отец ему яму копал,  
Жена ему саван сшивала —  
Всем разом работу вам дал!..»

250. Опять помычал — и без цели  
В пространство дурак побежал.  
Вериги уныло звенели,  
И голые икры блестели,  
И посох по снегу черкал.

He grunted, not unkindly, said  
« Well, isn't this a fine to-do?  
245. It's long he worked for you: instead  
it seems that time has come for you.

The mother has the coffin made,  
the father now has made the grave,  
the wife the shroud in which he's laid —  
so each gives back the work he gave! . . »

250. Again he grunted, cast around  
and ran off aimlessly to show  
the fetters with their clanking sound.  
The legs flash white above the ground,  
and staff leaves markings in the snow.



## VIII

255. У дома оставили крышу,  
К соседке свели ночевать  
Зазябнувших Машу и Гришу  
И стали сынка обрядать.

Медлительно, важно, сурово  
260. Печальное дело велось:  
Не сказано лишнего слова,  
Наружу не выдано слез.

Уснул, потрудившийся в поте!  
Уснул, поработав земле!  
265. Лежит, непричастный заботе,  
На белом сосновом столе,

Лежит неподвижный, суровый,  
С горящей свечой в головах,  
В широкой рубахе холщовой  
270. И в липовых новых лаптях.

Большие, с мозолями руки,  
Подъявшие много труда,  
Красивое, чуждое муки  
274. Лицо — и до рук борода...

## VIII

255. The coffin lid by house is laid;  
half-frozen children, duty done,  
have to a neighbour been conveyed.  
They now may dress their little son.

Slowly, in their grief interred,  
260. they set about the mournful task.  
They do not speak a single word:  
no tear runs down the outward mask.

He fell asleep in toil and sweat!  
In this his earthly dues are paid!  
265. Life's pressing cares he can forget,  
this one on white pine table laid.

How stern he looks and motionless,  
a candle by that handsome head.  
A canvas shirt is now his dress,  
270. in fine bast shoes the feet are spread.

The calloused hands have not again  
to work the fields: no fret or harms  
from toil and labour, nor from pain:  
the long beard comes to folded arms.

## IX

275. Пока мертвеца обряжали,  
Не выдали словом тоски  
И только глядеть избегали  
Друг другу в глаза бедняки.

Но вот уже кончено дело,  
280. Нет нужды бороться с тоской,  
И что на душе накопело,  
Из уст полилося рекой.

Не ветер гудит по ковыли,  
Не свадебный поезд гремит,—  
285. Родные по Прокле завыли,  
По Прокле семья голосит:

«Голубчик ты наш сизокрылый!  
Куда ты от нас улетел?  
Пригожеством, ростом и силой  
290. Ты ровни в селе не имел,

Родителям был ты советник,  
Работничек в поле ты был,  
Гостям хлебосол и приветник,  
Жену и детей ты любил...

295. Что ж мало гулял ты по свету?  
За что нас покинул, родной?  
Одумал ты думушку эту,  
Одумал с сырою землей,—

## IX

275. And while they dressed the body there,  
they set all words of grieving by,  
and each one took especial care  
to now not catch the other's eye.

But when at last the task was done,  
280. they need not keep their feelings in.  
From mouth the brimful heart can run,  
and floods of words will now begin.

No wind is in the feather grass,  
no wedding train is rattling by,  
285. but to a howl his kinsfolk pass,  
for Prokel there is one great cry.

«Why did you go, our dove of blue;  
and where, our dearest, have you flown?  
Strong, tall and handsome, you  
290. were best our village here has known.

As counsellor you put to rest  
a parent's cares, made fields your life.  
Hospitable to every guest,  
you loved your children and your wife.

295. Why such a brief walk in the light?  
Why leave your very hearth and home?  
What are you thinking of tonight,  
What thoughts within the cold, damp loam —

Х

Одумал — а нам оставаться  
300. Велел во миру; сиротам,  
Не свежей водой умываться,  
Слезами горючими нам!

Старуха помрет со кручины,  
Не жить и отцу твоему,  
305. ереза в лесу без вершины —  
Хозяйка без мужа в дому.

Ее не жалеешь ты, бедной,  
Детей не жалеешь... Вставай!  
С полоски своей заповедной  
310. По лету сберешь урожай!

Сплесни, ненаглядный, руками,  
Сокольным глазком посмотри,  
Тряхни шелковыми кудрями,  
Сахарны уста раствори!

315. На радости мы бы сварили  
И меду, и браги хмельной,  
За стол бы тебя посадили —  
Покушай, желанный, родной!

А сами напротив бы стали —  
320. Кормилец, надёжа семьи!—  
Очей бы с тебя не спускали,  
Ловили бы речи твои...»

X

Come back, reflect: we shouldn't stay  
300. bereft, as orphans here below:  
and not with water wash each day,  
but with the burning tears we know.

Your mother here will die of grief,  
your father follow on his spouse.  
305. The birch trees lack their topmost leaf  
if wife lacks man about the house.

Show your wife some pity, will  
you not? Your children? Stir yourself:  
your strip of land is yielding still,  
310. and summer brings its harvest wealth.

Clap your hands, my dearest one,  
regard us with that falcon's eye,  
shake out your curls, let everyone  
observe you give the fit reply.

315. How happily for you we'd brew  
our sweetened mead and malted beer,  
at head of table, as is due,  
we'd bid you eat and drink, my dear.

We'd give you pride of place, who too  
320. were our provider, one preferred.  
Our eyes would see the living you;  
we'd hang upon your every word. »

## Х

На эти рыдания и стоны  
Соседи валили гурьбой:  
325. Свечу положив у иконы,  
Творили земные поклоны  
И шли молчаливо домой.

На смену входили другие.  
Но вот уж толпа разбрелась,  
330. Поужинать сели родные —  
Капуста да с хлебушком квас.

Старик бесполезной кручине  
Собой овладеть не давал:  
Подладившись ближе к лучине,  
335. Он лапоть худой ковырял.

Протяжно и громко вздыхая,  
Старуха на печку легла,  
А Дарья, вдова молодая,  
Проведать ребяток пошла.

340. Всю ноченьку, стоя у свечки,  
Читал над усопшим дьячок,  
И вторил ему из-за печки  
343. Пронзительным свистом сверчок

X

A sad and murmurous crowd was there,  
the neighbours come from far around.  
325. Each bent and by the candle's flare  
and icon said a silent prayer,  
then, having prayed, was homeward bound.

Yet others were arriving still,  
but then dispersed, went home instead.  
330. The family can have its fill:  
kvass and cabbage and black bread.

So not to let unwanted grief  
affect him more, the old man drew  
towards the light and for relief  
335. began to plait an old bast shoe.

His woman, loudly sighing on,  
lay by the stove and would not stir,  
but now the widow Dar'ya's gone  
to check on how the children were.

340. Above the dead, the holy word  
the sexton read the whole night through.  
Behind the stove the listeners heard  
the cricket shrilly whistling too.



## XI

Сурово метелица выла  
345. И снегом кидала в окно,  
Невесело солнце всходило:  
В то утро свидетелем было  
Печальной картины оно.

Савраска, запряженный в сани,  
350. Понуро стоял у ворот;  
Без лишних речей, без рыданий  
Покойника вынес народ.

— Ну, трогай, саврасушка! трогай!  
Натягивай крепче гужи!  
355. Служил ты хозяину много,  
В последний разок послужи!..

В торговом селе Чистополье  
Купил он тебя сосунком,  
Взрастил он тебя на приволье,  
360. И вышел ты добрым конем.

С хозяином дружно старался,  
На зимушку хлеб запасал,  
Во стаде ребенку давался,  
Травой да мякиной питался,  
365. А тело изрядно держал.

## XI

A howling blizzard piled the snow  
345. and knocked upon the window panes,  
and sad was rising sun to know  
the melancholy scene below.  
A dismal picture now remains

in which there stood a roan-drawn sleigh,  
350. dejected, waiting at the gate.  
With no more words or tears to pay,  
the dead man's carried out in state.

— Now move, good roan. It's time to go.  
Pull harder, roan, you know these reins.  
355. You served your master times ago,  
and this one duty now remains.

In Chistópolis old market town  
he bought you as suckling colt,  
he fed you, never let you down,  
360. to raise a horse without a fault.

You worked with master willingly  
to lay up goods for winter's store.  
In youth he left you roaming free,  
well fed with grass and chaff to be  
365. in good condition, well cared for.

Когда же работы кончались  
И сковывал землю мороз,  
С хозяином вы отправлялись  
С домашнего корма в извоз.

370. Немало и тут доставалось —  
Возил ты тяжелую кладь,  
В жестокую бурю случалось,  
Измучась, дорогу терять.

Видна на боках твоих впалых  
375. Кнута не одна полоса,  
Зато на дворах постоянных  
Покушал ты вволю овса.

Слышал ты в январские ночи  
Метели пронзительный вой  
380. И волчьи горящие очи  
Видал на опушке лесной,

Продрогнешь, натерпишься страху,  
А там — и опять ничего!  
Да, видно, хозяин дал маху —  
385. Зима доконала его!..

And when those easy tasks were done,  
and earth was hard with frost and rime,  
you made the costs of carriage run  
there with your master one last time.

370. That share, a heavy one, was yours;  
but well you hauled the master's load  
until a blizzard gave you cause,  
or weariness, to miss the road.

Recall, however gaunt your flanks  
375. there was no mark of whip or lash,  
at every inn you passed were thanks  
well given in good oats and mash.

You heard the piercing blizzards howl  
on January's most bitter nights,  
380. you saw the burning wolves' eyes prowl  
at forest edge, the threatening sights.

Then cold and scared, you barely make  
out what was there or not: so dim  
perhaps your master's own mistake  
385. made winter be the end of him.

## XII

386. Случилось в глубоком сугробе  
Полсуток ему простоять,  
Потом то в жару, то в ознобе  
Три дня за подводой шагать:

390. Покойник на срок торопился  
До места доставить товар.  
Доставил, домой воротился —  
Нет голосу, в теле пожар!

Старуха его окатила  
395. Водой с девяти веретен  
И в жаркую баню сводила,  
Да нет — не поправился он!

Тогда ворожеек созвали —  
И поят, и шепчут, и трут —  
400. Все худо! Его продевали  
Три раза сквозь потный хомут,

## XII

A half day stuck in snow until  
he cleared the drifts that blocked the road:  
for three days, sweating hot and chill,  
he trudged behind the sledge's load.

390. So trod the dead man, strength near spent,  
but his delivery so bent upon  
till, all accomplished, home he went,  
his body fevered, voice quite gone.

His woman, thinking he was cursed,  
395. had then nine pumps of water poured,  
and he in hot bath prompt immersed:  
but no, he's not a whit restored.

Fortune-tellers next were brought,  
with potions, rubs and everything,  
400. but all their notions came to naught,  
as three times hauled through sweated ring.

Спускали родимого в пролубь,  
Под куричий клали насест...  
Всему покорялся, как голубь,—  
405. А плохо — не пьет и не ест!

Еще положить под медведя,  
Чтоб тот ему кости размял,  
Ходебщик сергачевский Федя —  
Случившийся тут — предлагал.

410. Но Дарья, хозяйка больного,  
Прогнала советчика прочь;  
Испробовать средства иного  
Задумала баба: и в ночь

Пошла в монастырь отдаленный  
415. (Верстах в десяти от села),  
Где в некой иконе явленной  
Целебная сила была.

Пошла, воротилась с иконой —  
Больной уж безгласен лежал,  
420. Одетый как в гроб, причащенный.  
Увидел жену, простонал

422. И умер...

They sought the ice-box, tried to shove  
him underneath where chickens roost.  
But, though submitting like a dove,  
405. all food and drink he still refused.

They thought that put beneath a bear  
might stretch his bones a bit, or so  
proposed a Sergach peddlar there,  
one Fyodor: the wife said no.

410. To superstitions not so blind,  
soon Dar'ya put them all to flight.  
A different means she had in mind,  
and set off quietly in the night.

To one far nunnery she went  
415. (indeed it was ten versts away)  
in which a certain icon meant  
God's healing power was hers today.

From thence she brought the icon back  
to one where life was scarcely owned.  
420. The last rites said, a shroud-dressed sack  
surveyed his new-come wife. He moaned

422. and died...



### XIII

422. ...Саврасушка, трогай,  
Натягивай крепче гужи!  
Служил ты хозяину много,  
425. В последний разок послужи!

Чу! два похоронных удара!  
Попы ожидают — иди!..  
Убитая, скорбная пара,  
Шли мать и отец впереди.

430. Ребята с покойником оба  
Сидели, не смея рыдать,  
И, правя савраской, у гроба  
С вожжами их бедная мать

Шагала... Глаза ее впали,  
435. И был не белей ее щек  
Надетый на ней в знак печали  
Из белой холстины платок.

За Дарьей — соседей, соседок  
Плелась негустая толпа,  
440. Толкуя, что Прокловых деток  
Теперь незавидна судьба,

Что Дарье работы прибудет,  
Что ждут ее черные дни.  
«Жалеть ее некому будет»,—  
445. Согласно решили они...

### XIII

422.           Roan, move one more time,  
and at the traces pull and strain:  
you served the master in his prime,  
425. and duty calls you once again.

By double peal of funeral bell,  
the priests there waiting, they are led,  
each overwhelmed by what befell,  
both parents going on ahead.

430. The children, sat at coffin head,  
are loath to show their tears: alone,  
the woman walked beside the sled  
and by the reins she led the roan.

She walked as in a trance: the eyes  
435. looked sunk and lost within the cheeks,  
each white as that white cloth that lies  
as headscarf and of sorrow speaks.

Behind them Dar'ya's neighbours wend,  
both men and women, spread out, few.  
440. They talk of what hard fate will send,  
and Prokel's children have to do.

« Now Dar'ya's work will much increase,  
and gloomy days but wait for her.  
From none there's pity or release. »  
445. And in one voice they all concur.

## XIV

Как водится, в яму спустили,  
Засыпали Прокла землей;  
Поплакали, громко повыли,  
Семью пожалели, почтили  
450. Покойника щедрой хвалой.

Сам староста, Сидор Иваныч,  
Вполголоса бабам подвыл  
И «мир тебе, Прокл Севастьяныч!—  
Сказал,— благодушен ты был,

455. Жил честно, а главное: в сроки,  
Уж как тебя бог выручал,  
Платил господину оброки  
И подать царю представлял!»

Истратив запас красноречья,  
460. Почтенный мужик побряхтел:  
«Да, вот она жизнь человечья!»—  
Прибавил — и шапку надел.

## XIV

Into the grave as customary  
was Prokel put, and then the earth.  
Loud cries went up, the family  
here hoping all around would be  
450. some witness to the good man's worth.

The starost, one Sidor Ivánich,  
to sorrow adds some words of praise.  
« Peace, Prokel Sevastiánych.  
You were kindly in your ways,

455. A good life, yours, and honest too.  
God helped you in your kindly acts.  
You paid and promptly what was due,  
submitting to the landlord's tax. »

With that, his eloquence was spent.  
460. « It's all of life we have as men, »  
the worthy peasant added, went  
and put his cap back on again.

«Свалился... а то-то был в силе!..

Свалимся... не минут и нам!..»

465. Еще покрестились могиле  
И с богом пошли по домам.

Высокий, седой, сухопарый,  
Без шапки, недвижно-немой,  
Как памятник, дедушка старый  
470. Стоял на могиле родной!

Потом старина бородатый  
Задвигался тихо по ней,  
Ровняя землю лопатой  
Под вопли старухи своей.

475. Когда же, оставивши сына,  
Он с бабой в деревню входил:

«Как пьяных, шатает кручина!

478. Гляди-тко!..» — народ говорил.

«He fell, though, at the height of strength.

It is a fall we each may earn. »

465. In God they cross themselves, at length  
with Him they also homeward turn.

Bareheaded, motionless, unbent,  
as something fashioned out of wood,  
the old man stayed, a monument  
470. that at the grave still mutely stood.

Bearded, aged, reflections made,  
he quietly to the grave then stepped,  
and shovelled earth in with a spade  
the while his wife still sobbed and wept.

475. Then, having left their son behind,  
returned to village, last tears shed,  
their grief deprived them of right mind.  
«They're reeling drunk! . . . » the people said.

XV

А Дарья домой воротилась —  
480. Прибраться, детей накормить.  
Ай-ай! Как изба настудилась!  
Торопится печь затопить,

Ан глядь — ни полена дровишек!  
Задумалась бедная мать:  
485. Покинуть ей жаль ребятишек,  
Хотелось бы их приласкать,

Да времени нету на ласки,  
К соседке свела их вдова,  
И тотчас на том же савраске  
490. Поехала в лес, по дрова...

XV

Dar'ya had returned alone,  
480. to change and feed the children there,  
but ay! how cold the hut had grown.  
She'd light the stove but found it bare.

No, not a stick of wood remains.  
How wrong it is that she'll condemn  
485. her poor dear children to such pains.  
She longs to stroke and comfort them,

but has no time for that. Instead  
she takes them to a neighbour's hut,  
then to the sled the roan is led:  
490. she has some forest wood to cut.



Часть вторая: МОРОЗ, КРАСНЫЙ НОС

XVI

491. Морозно. Равнины белеют под снегом,  
Чернеется лес впереди,  
Савраска плетется ни шагом, ни бегом,  
Не встретишь души на пути.

495. Как тихо! В деревне раздавшийся голос  
Как будто у самого уха гудет,  
О корень древесный запнувшийся полоз  
Стучит и визжит, и за сердце скребет.

Кругом — поглядеть нету мочи,  
500. Равнина в алмазах блестит...  
У Дарьи слезами наполнились очи —  
Должно быть, их солнце слепит...

Part two: RED-NOSED FROST

XVI

Hard frost: the fields are flooded white with snow,  
and dark the forest looms ahead.  
The roan won't walk or trot, but goes on slow.  
No soul is met, alive or dead.

495. How very quiet it is. Each village sound  
seems at the inmost ear to start:  
the runner, trundling over root-thick ground,  
again brought bumps and squeals against the heart.

To look around is hard: the brilliance sears  
500. surroundings with a diamond light.  
It may be Dar'ya eyes are filled with tears:  
no doubt the sun is over-bright.

## XVII

В полях было тихо, но тише  
В лесу и как будто светлей.  
505. Чем дале — деревья всё выше,  
А тени длинней и длинней.

Деревья, и солнце, и тени,  
И мертвый, могильный покой...  
Но — чу! заунывные пени,  
510. Глухой, сокрушительный вой!

Осилось Дарьюшку горе,  
И лес безучастно внимал,  
Как стоны лились на просторе,  
И голос рвался и дрожал,

515. И солнце, кругло и бездушно,  
Как желтое око совы,  
Глядело с небес равнодушно  
На тяжкие муки вдовы.

И много ли струн оборвалось  
520. У бедной крестьянской души,  
Навеки сокрыто осталось  
В лесной нелюдимой глуши.

Великое горе вдовицы  
И матери малых сирот  
525. Подслушали вольные птицы,  
Но выдать не смели в народ...

## XVII

Quiet and quieter grew the field  
and more distinct the forest too.  
505. The taller rose far trees, revealed  
by long, long shadows that they threw.

And through these shadows, trees and sun  
a death-like peace spread far around,  
but now a chiding has begun,  
510. a mournful, dull and crushing sound.

It's Dar'yushka, struck by grief.  
Impartially the forest heard.  
Such emptiness brings no relief  
to any heart-felt, troubled word.

515. Above, the yellow sun she'll see,  
unwinking, like an owl's blank stare,  
bear down the more indifferently:  
the widow feels no kindness there.

Whatever griefs may break the soul  
520. of peasants, woods will never speak.  
Hidden, unsociable and whole  
are silences the forests keep.

Deep sorrows widows have incurred  
in mothering children left behind,  
525. the wild birds too have overheard  
but do not speak to humankind. . .

## XVIII

Не псарь по дубровушке трубит,  
Гогочет, сорвиголова,—  
Наплакавшись, колет и рубит  
530. Дрова молодая вдова.

Срубивши, на дровни бросает —  
Наполнить бы их поскорей,  
И вряд ли сама замечает,  
Что слезы всё льют из очей:

535. Иная с ресницы сорвется  
И на снег с размаху падет —  
До самой земли доберется,  
Глубокою ямку прожжет;

Другую на дерево кинет,  
540. На плашку,— и смотришь, она  
Жемчужиной крупной застынет —  
Бела, и кругла, и плотна.

А та на глазу поблестает,  
Стрелой по щеке побежит,  
545. И солнышко в ней поиграет...  
Управиться Дарья спешит,

Знай, рубит,— не чувствует стужи,  
Не слышит, что ноги знобит,  
И, полная мыслью о муже,  
550. Зовет его, с ним говорит...

## XVIII

No huntsman through the forest stops  
to blow his horn and shout halloo,  
and, stifling tears, the woman chops  
530. and splits the wood as widows do.

The task completed, she then throws  
the cuts on sled to pile it high.  
It's quite unlikely that she knows  
how tears are running from each eye.

535. Some, brimming from the eyelash, fall  
and then a small, deep hole is found  
right through the snow and piercing all  
until it comes to solid ground.

Some tears upon the firewood fall,  
540. you see them frozen where they fell.  
And each is petrified, not small,  
but round and pearl-like, white as well.

Each in the eye will gleam a minute  
or down the cheeks will run anew;  
545. the sunlight there will play with it,  
but Dar'ya's still got much to do.

She goes on cutting wood although  
the feet – she doesn't feel them – freeze.  
And to her husband thoughts now go:  
550. she talks and calls, and almost sees.

## XIX

.....

.....

«Голубчик! красавицу нашу  
Весной в хороводе опять  
Подхватят подруженьки Машу  
И станут на ручках качать!

555. Станут качать,  
Кверху бросать,  
Маковкой звать,  
Мак отряхать!1

Вся покраснеет наша  
560. Маковым цветиком Маша  
С синими глазками, с русой косой!

Ножками бить и смеяться  
Будет... а мы-то с тобой,  
Мы на нее любоваться  
565. Будем, желанный ты мой!..

XIX

« Our dearest beauty: may the spring  
now make you dance and dance again,  
Masha's friends to make a ring:  
and tossing her, strong arms of men.

555. Go ahead,  
fling her high:  
that poppy head,  
watch it fly.

So is Masha, blushing red,  
560. so the little poppy head,  
her braids are yellow, eyes are blue.

Laughing, she will tap her feet,  
and with those steps we're dancing too.  
How admirable she is, and sweet,  
565. how happily we welcome you. »



XX

Умер, не дожил ты веку,  
Умер и в землю зарыт!  
Любо весной человеку,  
Солнышко ярко горит.

570. Солнышко все оживило,  
Божьи открылись красы,  
Поле сохи запросило,  
Травушки просят косы,

Рано я, горькая, встала,  
575. Дома не ела, с собой не брала,  
До ночи пашню пахала,  
Ночью я косу клепала,  
Утром косить я пошла...

Крепче вы, ноженьки, стойте!  
580. Белые руки, не нойте!  
Надо одной поспевать!

В поле одной-то надсадно,  
В поле одной неповадно,  
Стану я милого звать!

585. Ладно ли пашню вспахала?  
Выди, родимый, взгляни!  
Сухо ли сено убрала?  
Прямо ли стоги сметала?..  
Я на граблях отдыхала  
590. Все сенокосные дни!

Некому бабью работу поправить!  
Некому бабу на разум наставить.

XX

You died before your proper span,  
are dead in earth and out of sight!  
Pleasant is the spring for man,  
and when the sun is beaming bright.

570. And in that sunlight all revives,  
God's beauty to the world's revealed:  
the grassy field invites the scythes  
the plough's awaited by the field.

Downcast that morning, out I went,  
575. but food I didn't take or taste.  
I ploughed until the sun's descent.  
At night to mend the scythe I bent,  
to mow that morning went in haste.

Your sturdy legs will take the strain,  
580. and do not let soft hands complain,  
however solitary your task!

It's wretched to be left alone  
about the field and on your own:  
It is my dear one that I ask:

585. Does my ploughing earn your praise?  
Come, my darling, come and look.  
Is hay got in, and do we raise  
the haycock so it's true and stays?  
Throughout those long, hay-making days,  
590. but on the rake the rest I took.

No one to help a woman, nor direct  
her mind until the work is quite correct.

## XXI

Стала скотинушка в лес убираться,  
Стала рожь-матушка в колос метаться,

595. Бог нам послал урожай!  
Нынче солома по грудь человеку,  
Бог нам послал урожай!  
Да не продлил тебе веку,—  
Хочешь не хочешь, одна поспевай!..

600. Овод жужжит и кусает,  
Смертная жажда томит,  
Солнышко серп нагревает,  
Солнышко очи слепит,

Жжет оно голову, плечи,  
605. Ноженьки, рученьки жжет,  
Изо ржи, словно из печи,  
Тоже теплом обдает,

Спинушка ноет с натуги,  
Руки и ноги болят,  
610. Красные, желтые круги  
Перед очами стоят...

Жни-дожинай поскорее,  
Видишь — зерно потекло...  
Вместе бы дело спорее,  
615. Вместе повадней бы шло...

XXI

In the woods the yearlings start to graze,  
and mother rye's about her swelling ways

595. And God has sent a goodly crop:  
the chest-high stalks are standing strong.  
And God has sent a goodly crop! —  
though not for you a life that's long,  
but still I work and cannot stop.

600. The gadfly buzzes round and bites;  
a thirst accosts us in the heat.  
On sickle here the sun alights  
and blinds the eyes: a fiery sheet

to scorch the head and shoulders too.  
605. A fierce hot glare comes off the rye,  
to legs and hands comes sizzling through:  
we feel the furnace in that scorching sigh.

It's more on back the burden lies,  
but arms and legs, they also burn.  
610. Bewildering, about the eyes,  
the red and yellow circles turn.

But still the task is better done —  
though see, the grain now thickly flows —  
and quicker too with more than one:  
615. how much more pleasantly it goes.

## XXII

Сон мой был в руку, родная!  
Сон перед спасовым днем.  
В поле заснула одна я  
После полудня, с серпом;

620. Вижу — меня оступает  
Сила — несметная рать,—  
Грозно руками махает,  
Грозно очами сверкает.

Думала я убежать,  
625. Да не послушались ноги.  
Стала просить я помощи,  
Стала я громко кричать.

Слышу, земля задрожала —  
Первая мать прибежала,  
630. Травушки рвутся, шумят —  
Детки к родимой спешат.

Шибко без ветру не машет  
Мельница в поле крылом:  
Братец идет да приляжет,  
635. Свекор плетется шажком.

XXII

Dear me, my dream has come to pass.  
That afternoon, before Christ's day,  
as I slept singly in the grass,  
the sickle with me, out we lay.

620. And there it was, surrounding me:  
a mighty host rose all around.  
It waved its arms to menace me,  
it glared at me alarmingly.

I tried to run away but found  
625. my legs were not obeying me.  
I begged for help, and urgently,  
but heard my calls more wildly sound.

I sensed the ground that quakes and shouts,  
first mother running hereabouts,  
630. a rye that's rustling, breaks undone  
as children to their mother run.

And through the airless meadows sweep  
no windmill arms in steady beat.  
My brother comes, but falls asleep,  
the father-in-law has dawdling feet.

Все прибрели, прибежали,  
Только дружка одного  
Очи мои не видали...  
Стала я кликать его:

640. «Видишь, меня оступает  
Сила — несметная рать,—  
Грозно руками махает,  
Грозно очами сверкает:  
Что не идешь выручать?..»

645. Тут я кругом огляделась —  
Господи! Что куда делось?

Что это было со мной?  
Рати тут нет никакой!

Это не люди лихие,  
650. Не бусурманская рать,  
Это колосья ржаные,  
Спелым зерном налитые,  
Вышли со мной воевать!

They came up fast, they came up slow,  
and but one friend I had in all:  
then to my eyes he doesn't show,  
though loudly I began to call.

640. « Look, you see surrounding me  
a host of powers, and I'm afraid.  
They beckon me alarmingly.  
Their eyes and threatening arms I see:  
why aren't you coming to my aid?..»

645. Wildly then I looked around,  
and what was it, dear Lord, I found?

What had these troubled wits to bear  
but nothing? There was no one there!

These were no bands of wicked men,  
650, no Muslim army lay in sight,  
but only tops of rye again,  
the plump ripe seed which I had then  
supposed was spoiling for a fight.



Машут, шумят; наступают,  
655. Руки, лицо щекотят,  
Сами солому под серп нагибают —  
Больше стоять не хотят!

Жать принялась я проворно,  
Жну, а на шею мою  
660. Сыплются крупные зерна —  
Словно под градом стою!

Вытечет, вытечет за ночь  
Вся наша матушка-рожь...  
Где же ты, Прокл Севастьяныч?  
665. Что пособлять не идешь?..

Сон мой был в руку, родная!  
Жать теперь буду одна я.

Стану без милого жать,  
Снопки крепко вязать,  
670. В снопки слезы ронять!

Слезы мои не жемчужны,  
Слезы горюшки-вдовы,  
Что же вы господе нужны,  
Чем ему дороги вы?..

They waved and rustled as as I sought  
655. to cut, they stroked my face and hand.  
But with the sickle no more fought,  
no longer had the urge to stand.

At once I start the harvesting,  
I reap, and on my neck a sea  
660. of large ripe grains, in pouring, sting  
as hailstones do, continually.

So runs the work till night is here,  
but, mother rye, I'm solitary.  
Prokel Sevastiánych, my dear,  
665. why aren't you here and helping me?

And so it's come, the dream I've known:  
that I shall have to reap alone.

Without my dear one I shall reap  
and bind the sheaves, and every heap  
670. of rye must know the tears I weep.

Not pearls, these falling tears, but more  
the bitter grief a widow knows.  
What is it God needs you for,  
what purposes, do you suppose?

### XXIII

675. Долги вы, зимние ноченьки,  
Скучно без милого спать,  
Лишь бы не плакали оченьки,  
Стану полотна я ткать.

Много натку я полотен,  
680. Тонких добротных новин,  
Вырастет крепок и плотен,  
Вырастет ласковый сын.

Будет по нашему месту  
Он хоть куда женихом,  
685. Высватать парню невесту  
Сватов надежных пошлем...

Кудри сама расчесала я Грише,  
Кровь с молоком наш сынок-первенец,  
Кровь с молоком и невеста... Иди же!  
690. Благослови молодых под венец!..

Этого дня мы, как праздника, ждали,  
Помнишь, как начал Гришуха ходить,  
Целую ноченьку мы толковали,  
Как его будем женить,

695. Стали на свадьбу копить понемногу...  
Вот — дождались, слава богу!  
Чу, бубенцы говорят!  
Поезд вернулся назад,

Выди навстречу проворно —  
700. Пава-невеста, соколик-жених!—  
Сыпь на них хлебные зерна,  
Хмелем осыпь молодых!..

## XXIII

675. Long the winter nights I'll keep,  
and lonely ones, where I must grieve:  
were not my eyes to so much weep  
it is a linen I would weave.

A good, new linen, firm and long,  
680. where threads are straight and supple spun,  
so he will grow up fine and strong,  
and be in time the loving son.

For he will make as good a groom  
as any lass could here expect.  
685. Surely one of ours to whom  
the svat will gladly show respect.

I have combed out curls of Grisha's hair,  
he's blood and milk to us, our first-born son,  
and blood and milk the bride, who's also fair:  
690. God bless the aisle procession now begun!

How much we planned the match, awaiting it,  
and from the moment Grisha got to walk;  
Then for that wedding saving, bit by bit:  
just how we'd marry him, whole nights of talk.

695. So what we waited for, the wedding day  
is here, the joyful bells to show the way.  
The long procession's turned around,  
let's go and join that happy sound.

The bride's a pea-fowl passing by,  
700. the groom as falcon is, a bird of prey.  
Scatter on them grains of rye,  
as youths in hope of fortune say.

## XXIV

Стадо у лесу у темного бродит,  
Лыки в лесу пастушонке дерет,  
705. Из лесу серый волчище выходит.  
Чью он овцу унесет?

Черная туча, густая-густая,  
Прямо над нашей деревней висит,  
Прыснет из тучи стрела громовая,  
710. В чей она дом сноровит?

Вести недобрые ходят в народе,  
Парням недолго гулять на свободе,  
Скоро — рекрутский набор!

Наш-то молодчик в семье одиночка,  
715. Всех у нас деток — Гришуха да дочка.  
Да голова у нас вор —  
Скажет: мирской приговор!

Сгибнет ни за что ни про что детина.  
Встань, заступись за родимого сына!

720. Нет! не заступишься ты!..  
Белые руки твои опустились,  
Ясные очи навеки закрылись...  
Горькие мы сироты!..

## XXIV

The herd now wanders through the deep, dark wood,  
the shepherd searches, has bast shoes to make:  
705. the forest wolf is out for livelihood,  
but whose the lamb that it will it take?

And then a deep black fear, thick brooding like  
a heavy cloud above the village, came.  
And from those clouds a thunder bolt will strike,  
710. but at whose cottage it will aim?

For soon the news is noised abroad, and all  
our young ones to recruitment fall,  
at which they are no longer free.

For we of son and daughter have but one,  
715. so spare this Grisha here, our only son.  
But no, the village head will be  
a thief in this, his joint decree.

He'll die for no one, and for nothing won.  
Stand up, stand up, good fellow, for your son!

720. But no, there is no remedy,  
and feeble hands do nothing that they should,  
to us his bright blue eyes are closed for good:  
and more as orphans left are we.

XXV

Я ль не молила царицу небесную?

725. Я ли ленива была?

Ночью одна по икону чудесную

Я не сробела — пошла.

Ветер шумит, наметает сугробы.

Месяца нет — хоть бы луч!

730. На небо глянешь — какие-то гробы,

Цепи да гири выходят из туч...

Я ли о нем не старалась?

Я ли жалела чего?

Я ему молвить боялась,

735. Как я любила его!

Звездочки будут у ночи,

Будет ли нам-то светлей?..

Заяц спрыгнул из-под ночи,

Заинька, стой! не посмей

740. Перебежать мне дорогу!

В лес укатил, слава богу...

К полночи стало страшней,—

Слышу, нечистая сила

Залотошила, завыла,

745. Заголосила в лесу.

Что мне до силы нечистой?

Чур меня! Деве пречистой

Я приношенье несу!

Слышу я конское ржанье,

750. Слышу волков завыванье,

Слышу погоню за мной,—

XXV

To the Queen of Heaven haven't I prayed?

725. Was I lazy when I went

all night with icon, unafraid?

No, not once did I relent.

The wind was fiercely howling, snow lay deep,

and of the moon no gleam remains.

730. The sky above was confined thick in sleep,

and clouds themselves were hung with heavy chains.

Didn't I try, and try full well?

Was there any effort spared?

And all I was afraid to tell

735. that man of mine was how I cared.

If little stars come out at night,

do we the more securely fare?

A hare then bounded into sight.

Go back, I cried, and do not dare

740. to cross my path. Dear God, it went,

and was from woods but briefly sent.

From midnight on, more hard to bear.

I heard the spirits all around

begin their rustling, shrieking sound,

745. and then wild howling through the wood.

What should I care if evil lours

when I must fetch the Virgin's powers?

Respect my mission as you should!

I hear the horses, how they neigh,

750. I hear what howling wolves would say,

I hear them bounding after me.



Зверь на меня не кидайся!  
Лих человек не касайся,  
Дорог наш грош трудовой!

---

755. Лето он жил работаючи,  
Зиму не видел детей,  
Ночи о нем помышляючи,  
Я не смыкала очей.

Едет он, зябнет... а я-то, печальная,  
760. Из волокнистого льну,  
Словно дорога его чужедальная,  
Долгую — нитку тяну.

Веретено мое прыгает, вертится,  
В пол ударяется.  
765. Проклушка пеш идет, в рытвине крестится,  
К возу на горочке сам припрягается.

Лето за летом, зима за зимой,  
Этак-то мы раздобылись казной!

Милостив буди к крестьянину бедному,  
770. Господи! всё отдаем,  
Что по копейке, по грошику медному  
Мы сколотили трудом!..

Keep the ravening beast away,  
keep the robber's hand at bay,  
let our hard-earned money be.

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755. A summer lived laboriously,  
by winter's work he's kept away.  
All night I think continually,  
no wink of sleep till break of day.

Abroad he rides the cold and lonely road  
760 while I am working with the flax.  
I pull the easy thread, and he the load:  
how endlessly go on the tracks.

The spindle turns and rattles on the floor.  
He leaves the road,  
765. Prolushka, with God's blessing all the more,  
on foot, uphill, he pulls his heavy load.

Through winter after winter, summer's heat,  
By this we earn enough to eat.

So grant, good Lord, your mercy to the poor.  
770. Each grosh or kopek we have earned  
was got by labouring, labouring, more and more,  
till what was gained to you returned!

## XXVI

Вся ты, тропина лесная!  
Кончился лес.  
775. К утру звезда золотая  
С божьих небес

Вдруг сорвалась — и упала,  
Дунул господь на нее,  
Дрогнуло сердце мое:  
780. Думала я, вспоминала —

Что было в мыслях тогда,  
Как покати́лась звезда?

Вспомнила! ноженьки стали,  
Силюсь идти, а нейду!  
785. Думала я, что едва ли  
Прокла в живых я найду...

Нет! не попустит царица небесная!  
Даст исцеленье икона чудесная!  
Я осенилась крестом  
790. И побежала бегом...

Сила-то в нем богатырская,  
Милостив бог, не умрет...  
Вот и стена монастырская!  
Тень уж моя головой достает  
795. До монастырских ворот.

Я поклонилась земным поклоном,  
Стала на ноженьки, глядь —  
Ворон сидит на кресте золоченом,  
Дрогнуло сердце опять!

XXVI

On, on I went and far,  
to pass the forest by.  
775. To see the morning's one gold star  
abroad in God's own sky.

And suddenly that star then fell.  
God blew and so revived its glow.  
My heart was still there trembling, though.  
780. I thought, remembering all too well—

But tell me what was in my mind  
when that bright star it could not find?

Remembering, my legs then stopped,  
will not obey, for all I strive.  
785. Indeed it seemed my thoughts would opt  
for finding Prokel scarce alive.

That, the Queen of Heaven will not allow:  
for sure her icon's healing even now.  
I crossed myself, and then began  
790. to run and run: how far I ran.

My man is stronger made than that,  
and God has mercy: he'll not die.  
It's now the nunnery I'm at.  
The pressing shadow of my head will lie  
795. within the convent gate hard by.

I bow in grateful reverence to the ground,  
but, stood upon my feet, I start.  
A gilded cross that is by raven crowned,  
at which a tremour seems to reach the heart.

.

## XXVII

800. Долго меня продержали —  
Схимницу сестры в тот день погребали.

Утренняя шла,  
Тихо по церкви ходили монашины,  
В черные рясы наряжены,  
805. Только покойница в белом была:

Спит — молодая, спокойная,  
Знает, что будет в раю.  
Поцеловала и я, недостойная,  
Белую ручку твою!

810. В личико долго глядела я:  
Всех ты моложе, нарядней, милей,  
Ты меж сестер словно горлинка белая  
Промежду сизых, простых голубей.

В ручках чернеются четки,  
815. Писанный венчик на лбу.  
Черный покров на гробу —  
Этак-то ангелы кротки!

Молви, касатка моя,  
Богу святыми устами,  
820. Чтоб не осталась я  
Горькой вдовой с сиротами!

Гроб на руках до могилы снесли,  
С пеньем и плачем ее погребли.

## XXVII

800. I had to wait, a long delay:  
there was a sister nun interred that day.

By Matins led,  
in silence through the church in long, massed rows  
the nuns process: in black each goes,  
805. except one draped in white, the sister dead.

She seemed but sleeping, life there won  
from Paradise, the world not missed,  
that I was moved, and this unworthy one  
the nun's pale hand then gently kissed.

810. And stared. To me that face had youth:  
how brightly hued and still and neat it lay.  
She seemed the pure white turtledove in truth,  
the others pigeons, bluish-grey.

It seemed her rosary would speak  
815. or written halo round her head:  
with that black robe on coffin spread  
she was as angels are, and meek.

Let your speech be rapt and brief,  
but made to God with reverence.  
820. How hard would be a widow's grief  
if left with orphaned children thence.

By many hands to grave was coffin carried,  
and she with songs and weeping so was buried.

XXVIII

Двинулась с миром икона святая,  
825. Сестры запели, ее провожая,  
Все приложились к ней.

Много владычице было почету:  
Старый и малый бросали работу,  
Из деревень шли за ней.

830. К ней выносили больных и убогих...  
Знаю, владычица! знаю: у многих

Ты осушила слезу...  
Только ты милости к нам не явила!

.....  
.....

Господи! сколько я дров нарубила!  
835. Не увезешь на возу...»

## XXVIII

Borne on in peace the holy icon went,  
825. escorting sisters singing their assent:  
each would kiss it and would pray.

And this to honour her, the Virgin asks  
of all. The young and old had left their tasks  
and come from hamlets far away.

830. Then brought to icon were the sick and poor,  
though, Holy Virgin, I know many more:

those whose grieving tears were slowed  
and stayed: at us alone your mercy stopped.

.....

.....

Dear Lord! How many logs and logs I chopped?  
835. And more than make a single load.



## XXIX

Окончив привычное дело,  
На дровни поклала дрова,  
За вожжи взялась и хотела  
Пуститься в дорогу вдова.

840. Да вновь пораздумалась, стоя,  
Топор машинально взяла  
И тихо, прерывисто воя,  
К высокой сосне подошла.

Едва ее ноги держали,  
845. Душа истомилась тоской,  
Настало затишье печали —  
Невольный и страшный покой!

Стоит под сосной чуть живая,  
Без думы, без стопа, без слез.  
850. В лесу тишина гробовая —  
День светел, крепчает мороз.

## XXIX

So with her usual task now done,  
the widow loads the sled with wood;  
she took the reins and had begun  
her start upon the way she should,

840. when, still reflecting, thought again,  
and stopped, though hardly knowing why.  
She took the axe and still in pain  
approached a lofty pine nearby.

The legs could hardly hold her weight.  
845. When would the soul's hard sorrows cease?  
There came a lull to that grieved state,  
a terrible, unwanted peace.

Beneath, not knowing how or whom,  
she gave no moan, her cheeks not wet.  
850. The woods were silent as the tomb,  
the day still bright, frost sharper yet.

XXX

Не ветер бушует над бором,  
Не с гор побежали ручьи,  
Мороз-воевода дозором  
855. Обходит владенья свои.

Глядит — хорошо ли метели  
Лесные тропы занесли,  
И нет ли где трещины, щели,  
И нет ли где голой земли?

860. Пушисты ли сосен вершины,  
Красив ли узор на дубах?  
И крепко ли скованы льдины  
В великих и малых водах?

Идет — по деревьям шагает,  
865. Трещит по замерзлой воде,  
И яркое солнце играет  
В косматой его бороде.

Дорога везде чародею,  
Чу! ближе подходит, седой.  
870. И вдруг очутился над нею,  
Над самой ее головой!

Забравшись на сосну большую,  
По веточкам палицей бьет  
И сам про себя удалую,  
875. Хвастливую песню поет:

XXX

No winds to howl through forest ways,  
no rivers sweep through mountain chains:  
our General Frost patrols: his gaze  
855. traverses wintery, vast domains.

He checks that blizzards have concealed  
all trace of earlier forest trails,  
that every crack and chink is sealed,  
a thickly-covered earth prevails.

860. Are tops of pine trees fluffed up right,  
do oak tree have their handsome bole?  
Is vagrant water frozen tight,  
in various ice floes locked up whole?

He strides across the tree-tops, makes  
865. the frozen waters crackle, lays  
the sunlight's brilliance on the lakes  
that sets his shaggy beard ablaze.

The sorcerer is everywhere,  
the white-haired one. On silent tread  
870. he closes on her. Now, beware!  
He's suddenly above her head.

On that great pine the sorcerer sits,  
that heavy mace of his he swings.  
He smashes branches into bits,  
875. and what a boastful song he sings.

XXXI

«Вглядись, молодица, смелее,  
Каков воевода Мороз!  
Навряд тебе парня сильнее  
И краше видать привелось?»

880. Метели, снега и туманы  
Покорны морозу всегда,  
Пойду на моря-окияны —  
Построю дворцы изо льда.

Задумаю — реки большие  
885. Надолго упрячу под гнет,  
Построю мосты ледяные,  
Каких не построит народ.

Где быстрые, шумные воды  
Недавно свободно текли —  
890. Сегодня прошли пешеходы,  
Обозы с товаром прошли.

Люблю я в глубоких могилах  
Покойников в иней рядить,  
И кровь вымораживать в жилах,  
895. И мозг в голове леденить.

XXXI

« Be bold, young woman, come and see  
what sort of Governor is your Frost.  
Could such a handsome fellow be,  
or strong, on any path you've crossed?

880. Blizzards with their mist and snow  
are in my unremitting vice,  
I build where restless oceans flow  
my glistening palaces of ice.

By me are roaring rivers stilled  
885. to depths of ice, and I can span  
vast distances in bridges, build  
more splendidly than any man.

Where swift and noisy waters were  
quite recently, and freely flowed,  
890 today pedestrians barely stir  
or push on carts their heavy load.

I love to pierce the last remains,  
and sprinkle hoar frost on the dead,  
to freeze the blood within the veins,  
895. and fill the brain with ice instead.

На горе недоброму вору,  
На страх седоку и коню,  
Люблю я в вечернюю пору  
Затеять в лесу трескотню.

900. Бабенки, пеняя на леших,  
Домой удирают скорей.  
А пьяных, и конных, и пеших  
Дурачить еще веселей.

Без мелу всю выбелю рожу,  
905. А нос запылает огнем,  
И бороду так приморожу  
К вожжам — хоть руби топором!

Богат я, казны не считаю,  
А все не скудеет добро;  
910. Я царство мое убираю  
В алмазы, жемчуг, серебро.

Войди в мое царство со мною  
И будь ты царицею в нем!  
Поцарствуем славно зимою,  
915. А летом глубоко уснем.

Войди! приголублю, согрею,  
Дворец отведу голубой...»  
И стал воевода над нею  
Махать ледяной булавой.

I'm on the hunt for any thief,  
strike fear in man and horseman found.  
I love in every tree and leaf  
to make my threatening, creaking sound.

900. Then women talk of wood-sprites there:  
straight home, unnerved, and fast they run.  
And drunks on foot or horseback bear  
my yet more riotous zest for fun.

I turn their unchalked faces white  
905. and then I make their noses burn,  
their beards to reins so frozen tight  
to severing axe they have to turn.

I'm far too rich to count each chest,  
my wealth will always grow unchecked;  
910. with silver is my kingdom dressed,  
with diamonds and with pearls is decked.

Come, assume that kingdom, be  
my queen within its splendid sweep.  
Embrace these wintry realms with me  
915. and in the summer fall asleep.

Come, you'll be caressed and warm,  
my palace is an azure place. »  
The General, on her chilling form,  
began to swing his icy mace.



## XXXII

920. «Тепло ли тебе, молодница?» —  
С высокой сосны ей кричит.  
— Тепло!— отвечает вдовица,  
Сама холодеет, дрожит.

Морозко спустился пониже,  
925. Опять помахал булавой  
И шепчет ей ласковой, тише:  
«Тепло ли?..» — Тепло, золотой!

Тепло — а сама коченеет.  
Морозко коснулся ее:  
930. В лицо ей дыханием веет  
И иглы колючие сеет  
С седой бороды на нее.

И вот перед ней опустился!  
«Тепло ли?» — промолвил опять,  
935. И в Проклушку вдруг обратился,  
И стал он ее целовать.

В уста ее, в очи и в плечи  
Седой чародей целовал  
И те же ей сладкие речи,  
940. Что милый о свадьбе, шептал.

И так-то ли любо ей было  
Внимать его сладким речам,  
Что Дарьюшка очи закрыла,  
Топор уронила к ногам,

945. Улыбка у горькой вдовицы  
Играет на бледных губах,  
Пушисты и белы ресницы,  
Морозные иглы в бровях...

XXXII

920. « So are you warm, young lady» come  
the General's questions from the tree.  
The widow shivers and grows numb,  
but answers, warm as warm can be.

Frost drops a little, venturing near.  
925. He waves his mace, and whispering,  
says, «Are you truly warm, my dear? »  
I'm warm, kind sir, in everything.

Warm she is, but slowly grows  
the stiffness as he touches her.  
930. Now on her face his cold breath blows  
its prickly needles, thickly sows  
his freezing beard of winter fur.

Frost now drops down and closer peers,  
but still he makes the same appeals.  
935. To her it's Prokel that appears,  
and his fond kisses that she feels.

The white-haired wizard kisses her,  
on lips, on eyes, on shoulder: they  
assume the words that used to stir  
940. her once, upon her wedding day.

So happy then was Dar'ya made,  
how sweet the declarations sound,  
that Dar'ya's eyes to sleep have strayed,  
and axe dropped quietly to the ground.

945. And on sad lips has grown a smile,  
though these to pale and paler grown;  
on brow and eyelash all the while  
frost's needles now are tightly sown.

### XXXIII

В сверкающий иней одета,  
950. Стоит, холодеет она,  
И снится ей жаркое лето —  
Не вся еще рожь свезена,

Но сжата,— полегче им стало!  
Возили снопы мужики,  
955. А Дарья картофель копала  
С соседних полос у реки.

Свекровь ее тут же, старушка,  
Трудилась; на полном мешке  
Красивая Маша-резвушка  
960. Сидела с морковкой в руке.

Телега, скрипя, подъезжает,—  
Савраска глядит на своих,  
И Проклушка крупно шагает  
За возом снопов золотых.

965. — Бог помочь! А где же Гришуха?—  
Отец мимоходом сказал.  
«В горохах»,— сказала старуха.  
— Гришуха!— отец закричал,

На небо взглянул:— Чай, не рано?  
970. Испить бы...— Хозяйка встает  
И Проклу из белого жбана  
Напиться кваску подает.

### XXXIII

With glittering frost is Dar'ya dressed,  
950. but still she stands there, yet more cold.  
She dreams of summers past that blessed  
with gathered rye the sheaves of old.

The rye's been cut and now it will  
be easier carried in or tied.  
955. Dar'ya finds potatoes still  
in plots along the river's side.

Her old, bent mother-in-law has come,  
and with a bag has all things planned.  
And Masha, always frolicsome,  
960. is sat with carrot in his hand.

The creaking cart is there, beside  
a horse that's easy at the rein.  
Prokel in his giant stride  
is treading after heaps of grain.

965. God help us, where's our Grisha got  
to now? he asks. « His usual game:  
amongst the peas, as like as not, »  
his wife replies. They call his name.

He notes the sun now in the sky,  
970. It's not too early yet, I think.  
My wife can bring the white jug by  
and give her man kvass to drink.

Гришуха меж тем отозвался:  
Горохом опутан кругом,  
975. Проворный мальчуга казался  
Бегущим зеленым кустом.

— Бежит!.. у!.. бежит, постреленок,  
Горит под ногами трава!—  
Гришуха черен, как галчонок,  
980. Бела лишь одна голова.

Крича, подбегает вприсядку  
(На шее горох хомутом).  
Попотчевал баушку, матку,  
Сестренку — вертится вьюном!

985. От матери молодцу ласка,  
Отец мальчугана щипнул;  
Меж тем не дремал и савраска:  
Он шею тянул да тянул,

Добрался,— оскаливши зубы,  
990. Горох аппетитно жует,  
И в мягкие добрые губы  
Гришухино ухо берет...

The call had done its work because  
it's Grisha running up they see.  
975. and like a moving bush he was,  
and quite awash with greenery.

He runs, the imp, and runs. The track  
beneath is burning: so is sped  
their Grisha, who is jackdaw black,  
980. the only white about his head.

And so he bounds up happily,  
the peas strung round him like a wheel:  
grand-mother, mother, sister see  
him twisting like a frisky eel.

985. His mother strokes him with a smile,  
his father gives a friendly squeeze.  
The roan is not asleep meanwhile,  
but stretches out towards the peas

and, showing teeth, he these now grips,  
990. attracted by their taste and smell,  
and in his soft and hairy lips  
he nibbles Grisha's ear as well.

## XXXIV

Машутка отцу закричала:  
— Возьми меня, тятка, с собой!  
995. Спрыгнула с мешка — и упала,  
Отец ее поднял. «Не вой!

Убилась — неважное дело!..  
Девчонок не надобно мне,  
Еще вот такого пострела  
1000. Рожай мне, хозяйка, к весне!

Смотри же!..» Жена застыдилась:  
— Довольно с тебя одного!—  
(А знала под сердцем уж билось  
Дитя...) «Ну! Машук, ничего!»

1005. И Проклушка, став на телегу,  
Машутку с собой посадил.  
Вскочил и Гришуха с разбегу,  
И с грохотом воз покати.

Воробушков стая слетела  
1010. С снопов, над телегой взвилась.  
И Дарьюшка долго смотрела,  
От солнца рукой заслонясь,

Как дети с отцом приближались  
К дымящейся риге своей,  
1015. И ей из снопов улыбались  
Румяные лица детей...

## XXXIV

It then was Masha's turn to call:  
Daddy, let me come with you!  
995. From sack she jumped, but came to fall.  
Her father picked her up on cue.

« Well here's a fine one, I must say.  
What use are girls for anything?  
Our boy is blest, though. Let us pray  
1000. we have a new one by the spring. »

His good wife blushes, wants to say,  
« One boy's enough » although she knew  
they had another on the way.  
« Now, Mashúk come, there's lots to do. »

1005. So Prokel's journey will begin,  
with Masha seated by him. They  
see Grisha at a run jump in;  
the rattling cart then rolled away.

Above the cart and harvest land  
1010. a flock of sparrows took its flight,  
and Dar'ya, shielding with her hand,  
then followed them till out of sight.

She saw her husband and the children too,  
the drying barn, and from the blur  
1015. their rosy faces came in view:  
how happily they looked at her.



Чу, песня! знакомые звуки!  
Хорош голосок у певца...  
Последние признаки муки  
1020. У Дарьи исчезли с лица,

Душой улетаю за песней,  
Она отдалась ей вполне...  
Нет в мире той песни прелестней,  
Которую слышим во сне!

1025. О чем она — бог ее знает!  
Я слов уловить не умел,  
Но сердце она утоляет,  
В ней дольного счастья предел.

В ней кроткая ласка участия,  
1030. Обеты любви без конца...  
Улыбка довольства и счастья  
У Дарьи не сходит с лица.

So with the song, now heard again  
and sung so well, all lingering trace  
of life's great hardships, hurt and pain  
1020. have disappeared from Dar'ya's face.

Her soul departed with the song.  
She gave her being to the stream  
of melody for which we long:  
there's nothing prettier in a dream.

1025. Of what it sang, our Lord but knows,  
or thoughts or words it would express,  
but to the listening heart it shows  
our earthly bound of happiness.

And in it there is fate's caress,  
1030. and endless love, eternal grace:  
contentment and quiet happiness  
will not now leave our Dar'ya's face.

XXXV

Какой бы ценой ни досталось  
Забвенье крестьянке моей,  
1035. Что нужды? Она улыбалась.  
Жалеть мы не будем о ней.

Нет глубже, нет слаще покоя,  
Какой посылает нам лес,  
Недвижно, бестрепетно стоя  
1040. Под холодом зимних небес.

Нигде так глубоко и вольно  
Не дышит усталая грудь,  
И ежели жить нам довольно,  
Нам слаще нигде не уснуть!

XXXV

At last, whatever price be paid,  
she can forget what came before.  
1035. she's smiling now and unafraid:  
we will not pity her the more.

There is no kinder, deeper peace  
than what these forests show our eyes,  
when we have fear and motion cease  
1040. and stand beneath cold winter skies.

Nowhere peace so generous,  
to deeper breathe the weary breast:  
if life has been enough for us,  
no sweeter place to take our rest.

XXXVI

1045. Ни звука! Душа умирает  
Для скорби, для страсти. Стоишь  
И чувствуешь, как покоряет  
Ее эта мертвая тишь. 1000 in Ticknor

Ни звука! И видишь ты синий  
1050. Свод неба, да солнце, да лес,  
В серебряно-матовый иней  
Наряженный, полный чудес,

Влекущий неведомой тайной,  
Глубоко бесстрастный... Но вот  
1055. Послышался шорох случайный —  
Вершинами белка идет.

Ком снегу она уронила  
На Дарью, прыгнув по сосне,  
А Дарья стояла и стыла  
1060. В своем заколдованном сне...

XXXVI

1045. No sound now comes, nor can it bring  
more pain or love: the soul's released.  
You stand and feel how conquering  
the silence round when all has ceased.

No sound! You gaze into the blue  
150. of sky, the gathered sunshine, trees  
apparelled in their silver hue  
of miracles that winter sees,

and think of unknown mysteries  
removed from us and still unread.  
1055. Then comes a rustling through the trees:  
a squirrel bounds on overhead.

And with it come soft falls of snow  
from branches touched, a drifting stream,  
but Dar'ya frozen far below  
1060. is lost in her enchanted dream.

# Notes

Text:

20. The arrow may refer to the arrows of Apollo, i.e. to death itself.

37-48. Nekrásov was greatly attached to his mother and sister, but the childhood incident(s) referred to remain obscure.

49. Savraska in the Russian is actually the name of the horse, which I have rendered as 'roan mare' for clarity.

50 / 270. Bast shoes, traditional foot-ware for Russian peasants, were woven from the bark of linden or birch trees.

58. back may go: literally 'forward may go'. The timeline seems confused here, as Prokel died at home and the sled is presumably transporting him to his parent's house for washing and dressing of the body. Perhaps Nekrásov simply means that poets are not bound to a strict sequence of events.

61. Corner: also 'basement'.

86. As a young man, Nekrasov often helped his father on estate duties.

156. Kvas(s) is a lightly-fermented beverage made from black rye bread.

181. The old man is the father of the deceased peasant Prokel. Prokel's wife, the focus of Part Two of the poem, is Dar'ya (also Darya, Dar'ia, and Dar'ja in various renderings.)

316. The 'sweetened mead and malted beer' is literally mead and hop beer in the Russian.

326. An icon is a religious depiction of the Saviour, the Madonna or a saint.

341. The sexton is a member of the congregation charged with maintaining the church and graveyard, here providing last offices for the dead.

356. There are many Chistópols, in Russia and the Ukraine.

408. Sergach: from the Tartar lands.

437. The white headscarf denotes grief.

451. Starost is a village elder. Sídor Ivánich: Sídor the son of Iván (John).

453. Prokel Sevastiánych: Prokel the son of Sevastiá (Sebastian)

511. Dar'yushka is a familiar form of Dar'ya.

551-564. Refers to the national game of 'sowing the poppy', in which a young man or girl sits in the middle of a circle and is tossed into the air.

617. Christ's day: St. Saviour's day in early or mid August.

686. Svat: marriage broker.

692. Grísha is the familiar form of Grigóri, and the son of Prokel and Dar'ya. Their daughter is Másha, the familiar of María, also Mashúk.

738. An unlucky sign.

770. The grosh(en) and kopek were low-denomination copper coins.



# Appendix

## Significance of Nekrásov

Nikoláy Alekséyevich Nekrásov was born in November 1821 in Nemirov, a small town in southwestern Russia. His father, Alekséy Sergéyevich Nekrásov, was a Russian regimental officer. His mother, Eléna Andréyevna Zakrzewska, beautiful and well educated, is generally held to have come from wealthy Polish nobility. {1} Against her parent's wishes she had married the handsome but barely literate guardsman, indeed had eloped with him from a ball, but came to regret the decision when her husband retired from the army in 1823 to manage his family estates of Greshnevo, northeast of Moscow, and the dashing young officer turned into bullying local squire, physically mistreating his wife and others, drinking hard and taking up with local women. Elena died when Nikoláy was twenty, but she opened his eyes to music and the literature of other languages, probably encouraging him to enrol at St. Petersburg University. Alekséy Sergéyevich, who had expected his son to enrol in the cadet corps, promptly terminated the allowance, and Nekrásov was left to starve, taking what work he could find, generally tutoring and hack pieces for literary magazines. Nekrásov wrote hundreds if not thousands of articles, plays and poems in these hard years of destitution, where on some days he did not eat at all. {2,3}

University attendance was untenable in the circumstances, and Nekrásov had not, in any case, been scholastically prepared. In truth, he had learned little at the local school, probably hiding his unhappiness by alienating everyone, pupils and staff, by writing unflattering verses on them. Yet Nekrásov, toughened by his father's insistence that the young man accompanying him on hunts and estate business, not only survived the 1839-42 years of destitution, but had emerged by 1847 as the editor and part owner of the leading literary magazine of the country. The reasons were firstly Nekrásov's prodigious energy, which he retained until cancer sapped his strength in the last years of his life. The second was his business acumen, which the destitution and modest background had toughened into devious resolve, allowing Nekrásov to act ruthlessly in ways unacceptable to genuine aristocrats like Turgénev and Tolstóy. And the third was the help of the great critic Belínsky, who gave him more rewarding literary assignments and then introductions to the better writers of the day. Vissarion Belínsky (1811-48) was dismissive of Nekrásov's first book of poetry, the 1840 *Dreams and Sounds*, criticizing its empty Romantic clichés, but by 1842 had begun to realize that Nekrásov shared his view of social responsibility in the arts. He came to encourage his pupil, collaborating in his articles, inviting reviews from Nekrásov's own pen, and leaving Nekrásov in charge of magazines when ill health forced protracted stays in the south. {2,3}

In the summer of 1846, Nekrásov suggested to his friends G.M. Tolstóy and I.I. Panaev that they purchase Púshkin's

old magazine *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary), which had fallen on hard times. The two friends would put up the funds, and Nekrásov act as editor and publisher. Belínsky was excluded because his death, which was fast approaching, would leave his inheritance in unknown hands. It was a shrewd business move. Under Nekrásov, the *Sovremennik* became the foremost organ of revolutionary democracy in Russia, bringing out all the important names for the next twenty years in Russian literature, i.e. Turgénev, Dostoévsky, Goncharóv, Tolstóy and others. Nekrásov rediscovered Tyútchev, and also published his own poems, evading the censorship that continually delayed publication in book form. {2,3}

Nekrásov was always enterprising, reviewing his contemporaries, and making the *Sovreménnik* ever more radical. In 1854 invited Nikoláy Chernyshévsky to join the magazine, and, four years later, Nikoláy Dobrolyúbov became a major contributor. It was the latter's 1859 negative review that outraged Turgénev and more liberal sentiment, and led to Turgénev's departure from the magazine. {2,3}

Matters went no more smoothly in matters of the heart. Nekrásov took up with the wife of an older colleague, Avdotya Panayeva, but even this ménage à trois foundered on Nekrásov's 'difficult' character. He was prone to depression, anger and hypochondria, spending days sprawled on a couch in gloomy spells of self-hatred. In 1863, however, while still with Avdotya, Nekrásov became

enamoured of the French actress Celine Lefresne, travelling abroad with her, staying in her Paris flat, and helping her financially. Seven years later, in 1870, he fell in love with the 19-year-old Fyokla Anisimovna Viktorova, a country girl he called Zináida Nikoláyevna. She became his literary secretary, and was accepted as such by the poet's friends, though less so by Nekrásov's sister. The two made peace in the closing years of Nekrásov's life, however, and the poet formally married Zináida in April 1877, as a gesture of gratitude and respect. {3}

In the 1850s Nekrásov was thought dangerously ill, erroneously as it happened, but, being thwarted by autocracy at every turn, this now rich editor took to gambling, high living and some dubious financial transactions. With the accession of Alexander II to the throne in 1855, however, a more liberal attitude returned, and the *Sovreménnik* started to thrive once more, continuing until the magazine was closed down in July of 1866, in the wake of an unsuccessful attack on the Tsar's life. Nekrásov appealed against closure by writing and reciting a poem in praise of the Tsar's most reactionary minister, but the 'the butcher of Warsaw' was not taken in by the ruse, which only blackened Nekrásov's name further in liberal circles. {2-5}

A year later, in November 1867, Nekrásov leased *Ochesestvennye zapista* (Fatherland Notes) and became its acting editor, a post he held until his death ten years later. Again the magazine changed its nature and became a

thriving entity, publishing work by the leading progressives and radicals. Nekrásov also found the time to write and publish in its pages the last of his important poems, including *Who Can Be Happy in Russia?*, and a collection of lyrics. But cancer of the stomach continued its ravages, an operation was ineffective, and the poet was confined to bed and in pain for the last year of his life. He died in St. Petersburg on January 8, 1878, perhaps convinced by the thousands of letters and telegrams received that he had indeed, against all the obstacles and his continued self-doubt, expressed the suffering heart of Russia. {2}

## Social Reality: Serfdom in Russia

The flavour of Russian country life is best grasped through the pages of Turgénev, Leskóv, Chékhov and Búnin, but not the bald facts. Serfdom in fact arrived in Russia much later than in Europe, and survived longer. It was not a leftover from a feudal world, but a system gradually imposed in the 14th and 15th centuries as the Tsars created a more centralized state, and noblemen sought to protect their lands from Tartar depredations. Peasants were prohibited from leaving their lands in 1597, and flight was made a criminal offence in 1658. Landowners could trade in serfs, i.e. sell serfs to neighbours, but not kill them. Runaway serfs had to be returned, often to brutal punishment. 'House servants for hire' and similar advertisements applied to the sale of landless serfs. At Emancipation in 1861, some 10.5 million serfs were privately owned, some 9.5 million were in state ownership and another 900,000 serfs were under the Tsar's personal patronage. {6-7}

Serfdom was inefficient but gave political stability. The serfs had lifetime tenancy but little incentive to improve their land or their lot. Unrest was frequent, moreover, and often exploited by Cossack uprisings, where the serfs sometimes took Cossack identity to escape bondage. It was a repressive system where any easing of restraints could be dangerous. In the immediate pre-Revolution years, for example, the unrest was horrific, with government officials murdered in their hundreds, and landowner properties burnt down across wide swathes of Russia.

Change arrived, but had come too slowly. Peter III's measures in 1762 ended the compulsory military service for nobles, which had served to justify serfdom, but many were nonetheless conscripted into the Napoleonic wars. An increasing proportion were 'mortgaged' to state credit associations: 20% in 1820 and 66% in 1859. The bourgeoisie were also allowed to own serfs for factory work: 52% of factory workers were in fact serfs by 1825. Serfdom had indeed been abolished from 1816 to 1819 in Estland, Courland, and Livonia, but the land stayed in noble hands and labour rent lasted till 1868. Serfdom was replaced by landless laborers and sharecropping, where workers had nonetheless to ask permission to leave an estate. {6-7}

The Great Emancipation of 1861 was on contentious terms, which only increased revolutionary pressures. The aristocracy kept the best of meadows and forests, and had any resulting debts forgiven by the state. Ex-serfs had to

pay for their plots of land, often at well over fair market prices, and such redemption payments were not abolished till 1907. And if the lifestyle, and indeed the very existence, of large landowners and the propertied classes were endangered, the lives of the emancipated peasants were not made any easier. Serfs indeed had to work for the landlord for two years after Emancipation, and landless serfs (domestic servants) naturally stayed landless.

Alexander II's decree was more in response to western ideas and the threat of widespread rebellion, leaving social attitudes untouched. Serf families were strongly patriarchal, and marriages were often arranged, with landowner help if necessary. Agricultural and domestic jobs were group efforts, with the wage going to the family, supplemented by factory earnings if children had left the land. Livestock and land were in the husband's name, but wives were responsible for clothing and home utensils. {6-7}

## Literary Expression in Nekrasov

Russian poets of the nineteenth century could not entirely escape Russia's pressing social problems but tended still to represent matters through Romantic notions, employing the iambic measures that Púshkin and Lérmontov brought to perfection. In contrast, the civic poets made social issues their central concern, detailing the monstrous injustices suffered by the peasantry and the poor generally. For such emotionally-charged themes the grace and detachment of previous styles was hardly suitable, and Nekrásov in

particular developed something more robust if not always refined or pleasing. {2} An example: Reflections at the Main Entrance (1858)

We're at the entrance now. A solemn date,  
as though beneath the will of some enslaving rite,  
the town compelled there out of fright,  
they drive up to that all-compelling gate.

Thence, having written down their name and rank,  
our visitors go home; each one  
delighted with importance won  
you'd think their status was the thing to thank.

On other days this most imposing entrance sees  
a press of squalid faces, each aware  
what words will do. An old man there,  
or widow cursed by life's infirmities.

Indifferent to them, shuffling papers, come and go  
the buzz of various flunkies. Still they wait  
all morning sometimes on this specious show,  
while more petitioners besiege the gate.

And once I saw a group of men, our nationhood  
of good plain rural Russian folk, each blest  
by church attendance. They at distance stood  
respectfully, with blonde head bent to chest.

They begged admission of the porter; he  
observed how hope and terror had unmanned  
each features. Ugly too, for one could see  
the skin on hands and head was rudely tanned.

Armchuyushka's shoulder bones poked through, but shored  
up heavy knapsack on his back.  
One had a cross, another's legs were scored  
with blood, and sported shoes of bast.



(In fact they'd walked a goodish length, and some  
30. indeed had come from distant provinces)  
but someone shouted at the ragged scum,  
affronted by life's wearied instances.

The porter, therewith, in a proper fright,  
rammed shut the door on such affray,  
refused entreaties, and the pilgrim's mite,  
and roundly sent them on their way.

'May God who judges show what's right,'  
so said the hands there flailing helplessly.  
I watched them filing out of sight;  
It seemed their heads were bared eternally.

You inhabiting great luxury  
will in your deepest slumber see . . .  
Who say that's life's a blessing all the same  
with comfort and a need for fame . . .

I say that woolfish greed is not a game.  
Wake up and save them. Surely still comes pleasure  
in saving them and dealing equal measure.  
And yet the happy ones are deaf to shame.

Do not invoke the wrath of heaven, care  
for these below who are your counterparts.  
How could you let a lowly people bear,  
this endless grief within their hearts.

You cannot feel, you say, or mourn this sorrow,  
find nothing for these people's sake?  
If life's a holiday with no tomorrow,  
does not its ending cry: awake?

But no, you're not the people's hero, then,  
find spectacle in people's good?  
Yet where's the glory if there are no men,  
without their brotherhood.

In contemplation as the purple sun  
would dye the azure waters when its day was done.  
With bars of gold the depths are tiled  
accompanied by lulling choirs of gentle sound

In warm blue waters, like a child  
you'll fall asleep while softly cared for: all around  
is what your dears ones will bequeath  
(though patience waiting for your death was finely ground)

Your last remains the funeral hearse conveys  
with all the pomp your title has to earn,  
to us a hero here, down all the days;  
if one the motherland will quietly spurn:  
magnificent will be the thunderous praise

Are we, however, such a personage  
to worry at small people's care?  
Let's be rid of them and so engage  
in more beguiling, safer fare.

There must be something to distract our minds  
for all the peasant may not benefit;  
Yes, it's providence that so unwinds,  
and, anyway, he's used to it.

Besides, the furthest hostlery affords  
the sight of on a ruble drunks. Each band  
in stumbling on and homeward afterwards  
will moan and curse his native land.

Wherever sower is, or is his keeper,  
wherever can a Russian man not moan?  
He moans in fields, beside the wayside trail,  
he moans in lock-ups also and the jail.

In mines he groans and groans on chains.  
He groans in barns and haystacks, will bewail  
himself of haycart on the steppeland plains.  
Russia's own poor home is tumble down.

The sun of God's not happy, sees  
distress around her in each far-off town,  
at gates of courts and ministries.

And on the Volga too her grief is heard.  
Across the mightiest river, Russia's home,  
that same vast groan in songs preferred,  
however hauling drudges roam.

The Volga spring sees endless water  
but does not overflow our fields so much.  
Yet the grief of people gives no quarter,  
across the land it troubles all they touch

Wherever people are, you'll hear them sigh  
and groan, so have the heart to ask them why.  
You will wake and see and, gathering strength,  
observe your destinies, obey what's right  
All you could have done is here at length  
set down: an aching song I've made to light  
the spirit on to its eternal strength.

There were indeed several Nekrásovs, each present to some extent in most works. There was Nekrásov the hack writer, whose hard years of destitution had taught a dangerous facility of mechanically writing verse, one that always remained beneath the surface, apt to break out when inspiration failed him. Then there was Nekrásov the writer of folklore rhythms, seen most clearly in *The Pedlar's Song* and *Who Can Be Happy? in Russia*, but which also appears in *Red-Nosed Frost*, in odd sections of Part Two. And finally there was Nekrásov the civic verse writer, who gradually extended the poetry of Russia's golden age, from something that gracefully expressed Romantic notions to something rough-hewn but nonetheless accommodating prosaic reality. This was the poetry that Nekrásov achieved

only occasionally and with great effort: it was most fully achieved in the 1860 to 1865 period, and tails off in quality afterwards.

Nekrásov published collections at wide intervals. His 1840 collection *Dreams and Sounds* was roundly criticized by Belínsky for its Romantic clichés and outworn themes. The 1856 collection was very different: a resounding triumph that made Nekrásov's reputation as poet and thinker. The poems were focused on social reality, and seemed a manifesto for revolutionary action. The later poems of 1859 to 1863 were probably the best, however, and include many still admired today: *Duma*, *Funeral*, *Kalistrat*, *Peasant Children*, *Pedlars* (1861) and *Red-Nosed Frost* (1863). Then followed the first chapters of *Who Can Be Happy in Russia?*, *Grandfather* (1870: about the Decembrists) *Russian Women* (1872-1873), *Contemporaries* (Satire: 1875-1876). The last works were a continuation of *Who Can Be Happy in Russia?* (heavily censored), *Sowers* (1877) and a final collection of lyrics. Complete and uncensored editions of Nekrásov's work appeared only in the twentieth century.

{2}

Real poetry was an intermittent gift in Nekrásov, appearing when his deep convictions broke forth in fitting expression. Often they did not, and even that extended masterpiece *Who Can be Happy in Russia?* has laboured passages in Part IV that spoil its compelling power. Most original were Nekrásov's folk songs, and, though some were lifted wholesale from published works, they were given their particular shaping by Nekrásov, complete with their ternary

rhythms and repeated statements. Conversely, some of Nekrásov's original productions, like the first poem in *The Peddlers*, were adopted across Russia as genuine folk songs, {7} particularly when set to music. The first part of *The Pedlars*:

See how many goods I pack:  
braid and cotton for your hair.  
Pity me and do not lack  
what these manly shoulders bear!

Until the night-time fills the skies,  
within the rye I'll wait, and show  
how dark will be those dark, dark eyes:  
everything I have must go.

Think what prices I have paid:  
don't be cautious, do what's right.  
Your lips will make a fine brocade:  
come, my sweet, and snuggle tight.

The night assumed a foggy cast,  
but on the jolly fellow fares:  
The long-awaited comes at last,  
and now the merchant sells his wares.

How carefully, carefully Katya trades  
apportioning what soon is lost,  
but then that care in kissing fades:  
he bids her name her highest cost.

She only knows the night is deep,  
and what there happened so befell  
her where the springing rye would keep  
her secret hidden, none to tell.

How easy now to bear the load,  
the strap marks do not hurt the skin:  
in all I offered her she showed  
a preference for that turquoise ring

So not the chintz or coloured scarf,  
the shift, or any useful thing.

She wouldn't wear for hay's behalf  
the girdle made for harvesting

.

It was the ring, for all I pressed  
her, she'd have nothing of my fare.

'Why flaunt myself with all the rest  
if one I want is nowhere there?'

So girls no better than they ought  
will stoop to play their silly tricks:

I it was sweet vodka brought,  
but she who still refused my gifts.

So you, unyielding one, now wait,  
take all I promised, all my wealth,  
flaunt the treasures that you hate.

I come to Pokrov, not in stealth,  
but celebrate your soul's estate:  
I'll lead you to the church myself.

But even this poem ends unhappily, with the pedlars being  
murdered for their takings, and Nekrásov's theme of  
Russia's suffering is again repeated.

Turgénev, Goncharóv and others had a sympathetic view of  
the peasantry, but it was always from the outside, from the  
land-owner's or educated classes' point of view. Nekrásov  
identifies with the individual, often using their rough  
language and common expressions. He was not a social  
reformer, though he was critical of the 1861 Emancipation  
of the Serfs, which, as he immediately noted, had not lifted

their burden of suffering in the slightest. Expelled from the land that no longer supported them, the serfs congregated as the working poor in Russia's fledgling industries and factories, where, denied political expression, they embraced ever more extremist political beliefs — beliefs that in the 1917 Revolution would finally undo the Tsarist state and usher in the Soviet regime, just as repressive, and often more so.

## Red-Nosed Frost: The Poem

*Red Nosed Frost*, published in 1863, was the first of Nekrásov's undoubted masterpieces, and the first to be translated into English. The poem is prefaced by a dedication to Nekrásov's sister, and then divided into two parts. The first is entitled *The Death of a Peasant*, and describes (with some flashbacks) the death and burial of the peasant Prokel, his parents and wife Dar'ya attending. The second is entitled *Red-Nosed Frost*, and describes the death of Dar'ya, again with multiple flashbacks.

Nekrásov's constant theme was, as he put it, 'the suffering of the Russian people.' {4} No doubt he sometimes idealized the serfs, which could lead to sentimentality, and that trait is not entirely missing from the *Red-Nosed Frost*:

95. Examples in odd places reach  
a calm solemnity, serene  
in strength and beauty, each  
with looks and stature of a queen.

But here it is part of a conscious strategy, to give the life of Dar'ya and Prokel a monumentality, an everyman status among Russia's peasantry. *Red-Nosed Frost* is the most literary of Nekrásov's works — in the Dedication, the idealisation of Slav women, in the depiction of General Frost and the elegiac sections that end the poem. {5} Contrast these with harsh realism in opening sections, the folkloric elements in Part Two, and the many vignettes of peasant life, and Nekrásov's strategy becomes clearer. It is one of collage, of adding a thickness of narrative with



varied themes and styles. Where Pushkin would have seamlessly woven in the needed elements, Nekrásov juxtaposes different styles and episodes, giving a cinematic sharpness to the poem, as though the world is seen from different perspectives, with some of the inconsequentiality of real life.

Poetry ceased to be the primary literary expression of mid-nineteenth century Russia, and the better poets, Tyútchev, Fet and Nekrásov, were not part of an active community as had been the poets of Pushkin's time, the golden years of Russian poetry. But nor were they wholly isolated. Pan-Slavism, the belief that the Slav way of life was intrinsically valuable, grew as a sustaining belief, whether that took on a conservative (Tyútchev) or revolutionary (Nekrásov) slant. Indeed a populist movement swept Russia, the Narodniks, who pictured the Russian countryside through short stories (Turgénev), civic poetry (Nekrásov) and genre paintings (the Wanderers). There were also missions to help the poor and oppressed classes. Much could be ill-informed or utopian in these bourgeois enterprises, which were not trusted by the peasants, incidentally, nor wanted by landowners clinging to their old privileges, but they were not steeped in the gloom and misery that Nekrásov depicted with such vengeance. The missions had no official backing in legislation, however, and Nekrásov was not the only gloomy portraitist. Before him came the bleak scenes of provincial life in Oblómov's *Dead Souls*, and after him, Búnin's truly terrible view of serf life in *The Village*. {4-5}

But Nekrásov did break the old mould of poetry. The most sympathetic picture of estate life is probably Turgénev's

*Huntsman's Sketches*, where the peasants are seen in such a kindly light that Alexander II resolved on emancipation. But Turgénev's portraits emerge out of a carefully selected atmosphere and diction. That most famous *Bezhin Lea* starts with: {8}

It was a beautiful July day, one of those days which come only after a long spell of settled weather.

And continues for a page, to end with:

Towards evening these clouds vanish; the last of them, darkish and smudged like smoke, lie in pink puffs against the setting sun; over the place where it has set as calmly as it rose into the sky, a scarlet radiance lingers for a short time over the darkened earth and, flickering softly, like a candle that is carried with great care, the evening star twinkles faintly in the sky.'

Beautiful writing, but, more importantly, one that set the tone for the story, bathing the characters with golden glow of evening that predisposes the reader to accept this sympathetic rendering. Nekrásov is very different:

A roan mare stuck there in the snow:  
50. two pairs of feet in bast-cold shoes  
and sled with cloth-wrapped coffin show  
what wretched things she has to use.

The woman's old, large mittened, tries  
to clamber down and urge on horse.  
55. The icicles that rim her eyes  
disclose that frost is out in force.

Here is no larger-sensed and edifying reality, no elevated tone or careful selection of words. The reader is plunged into mundane facts, into the hard, everyday struggle for survival that made a Russian peasant's life. Happy scenes occur only occasionally in the poem, and are overshadowed by the early deaths of the two protagonists.

There was also the tawdry aspect of money, never far from Nekrásov's thoughts. Poetry paid in early nineteenth century Russia, sometimes handsomely, and the author of *Dreams and Sounds* was expecting a tidy return on his juvenilia. He was disappointed, of course, and later chose to buy up and destroy existing stocks, but the work wasn't as devoid of merit as Belínsky supposed. The volume, which just bore the initials N.N., received some positive reviews, and at least anticipated Nekrásov's later themes. {9 } But the intention was to make money, and money, often in its most sordid aspects, continually appears in Nekrásov's work. {10} As his characters say: ' Life, in my opinion, is the art of making money. . . In the world, only money is important. . . On Goncharov's novels / One could build a house.'

Nekrásov never forgot his early days of destitution, and comments on man's exploitation of man appear constantly: as money-lending (*Vlas*), forced marriages (*On the Road*) landowner indifference (*A Dog Hunt*), neglect of estates (*The Forgotten Village*), arrogance of officialdom (*Reflections at the Grand Entrance*), back-breaking labour (*On the Volga*) or relations between the social classes (*Who Can Be Happy in Russia?*). Even Katya in the poem above bargains her affections for the pedlar's trinkets. In Red-Nosed Frost we have:

Through winter after winter, summer's heat,  
By this we earn enough to eat.

So grant, good Lord, your mercy to the poor.  
770. Each grosh or kopek we have earned  
was got by labouring, labouring, more and more,  
till what was gained to you returned!

To the genteel, book-buying public, Nekrásov's harrowing observations were not welcome, but he spoke the truth. Growing commercialism and industrialisation were destroying the Romantic attitudes of the land-owning classes, and a new St. Petersburg society was happily parading a wealth born of enterprise, profiteering and speculation. Nekrásov's business dealings could be decidedly shabby, but in this he was merely following the times, adopting attitudes that it would have been dishonest not to portray in his work. Professional writers first appeared in Russia of the 1840s, moreover, no doubt hacks of the worst sort to the 'superfluous classes' of land-owning aristocrats, but catering for a new readership of clerks, minor officials and legions of the partially educated. Nekrásov's themes, and his rough-hewn style confronted what his social betters had hitherto chosen to ignore. {10}

Nor was Nekrásov's childhood gift for satire entirely left behind. Mirsky saw *The Thief* as placing Nekrásov among the greatest of satirists, and lines of biting scorn are apt to appear in Nekrásov's narrative and even lyrical poems, though not always appropriately. {5} In *Red-Nosed Frost* there is the sly dig at the sexton's monotonous reading:

342. Behind the stove the listener's heard  
the cricket shrilly whistling too.

And the much darker recollection of Dar'ya's:

716. But no, the village head will be  
a thief in this, his joint decree.  
He'll die for no one and for nothing won.  
Stand up, stand up, good fellow, for your son

Even Nekrásov's spasmodic narration is designed to present existence as it appeared to his characters. The first part of Red-Nosed Frost proceeds fairly smoothly, though with reflections and flashbacks. But in the second part, poor Dar'ya's thoughts wander alarmingly, between the bleak prospects now awaiting her, the hopes and happy life before, and various dreams, premonitions and folklore tales — thoughts as disjointed as ours are in our everyday lives. How can this broken narrative be called lyrical? contemporary readers asked, forgetting Evgény Baratýnski's (1800-44) definition of lyrical poetry as 'the fullest awareness of the given moment.' Nekrásov's world is alive, in a painfully fragmented way.

## Structure of Narrative

Nekrásov's timeline in the poem is complicated, with reflections and numerous flashbacks that add substance to the narrative, but may thwart full understanding at first reading. In detail, the sections are as follows:

Dedication: lines 1 to 48.

## Part One: Death of a Peasant

Section I: Prokel's mother is bringing Prokel's body from Dar'ya's house to be dressed by his parents: lines 49 to 56.

Section II: Flashback to Prokel's house, where Dar'ya is sewing a shroud for the dead man laid out there: lines 57 to 68.

Sections III-IV: Digression extolling virtues of Slav women: lines 69 to 166.

Section V: Reflection that Dar'ya was one such: lines 167 to 178.

Section VI: Church cemetery, where Prokel's father is digging the grave: lines 179 to 220.

Section VII: Prokel's parents meet up and are accosted by the village idiot Pakhom: lines 221 to 254.

Sections VIII-IX: Parents dress Prokel's body and lament their loss: lines 255 to 322.

Section X: Villagers pay last respects to Prokel: lines 323 to 343.

Section XI-XII: Morning of funeral and flashback to cause of Prokel's death: lines 344 to 393.

Section XII: Villager's vain attempt to revive Prokel: lines 386 to 422.

Section XIII-XIV: Prokel's funeral: lines 422 to 478.

Section XV: Dar'ya's return to her house and decision to cut more firewood in the forest: lines 479 to 490.

## Part Two: Red-Nosed Frost

Section XVI-XVII: Dar'ya's drive to the forest and description of scene: lines 491 to 526.

Section XVIII: Dar'ya cuts wood but starts to freeze: lines 527 to 550.

Section XIX: Flashback to Dar'ya's first happiness with Prokel: lines 551 to 565.

Section XX: Dar'ya muses on life without Prokel: lines 566 to 592.

Section XXI: Dar'ya recalls harvesting the rye: lines 593 to 615.

Section XXII: Dar'ya recalls her threatening dream: lines 616 to 674.

Section XXIII: Dar'ya muses on future wedding of her son: lines 675 to 702.

Section XXIV: Dar'ya fears her son will be conscripted: lines 703 to 723.

Section XXV: Dar'ya remembers journey to fetch the healing icon: lines 724 to 754.

Section XXV: Dar'ya contrasts the two lives, hers and Prokel's: lines 755 to 772.

Section XXVI: Dar'ya remembered journey continued: lines 773 to 799.

Section XXVII-XXVIII: Dar'ya remembers arriving at nunnery and funeral in progress: lines 800 to 835.

Section XXIX: Return to present: Dar'ya exhausted from chopping wood: lines 836 to 851.

Section XXX: Arrival of General Frost: lines 852 to 875.

Section XXXI: General Frost boasts of his powers: lines 876 to 919.

Section XXXII: General Frost courts Dar'ya: lines 920 to 948.

Section XXXIII-XXXIV: Dar'ya remembers happy times with Prokel and family: lines 949 to 1016.

Section XXXIV: Dar'ya dies happily with her memories: lines 1017 to 1032.

Section XXXV: Requiem for Dar'ya: lines 1033 to 1044.

Section XXXVI: Dar'ya freezes into enchanted dream: lines 1045 to 1063.

## Critical Opinion

Nekrásov's achievement was continually misunderstood by his contemporaries. Some praised the verse but complained that its themes were overly charged with vengeance and doom. Others praised the fearless realism but accepted that the verse was less than pleasing. Critics, then and later, did not mince their words. Tchaikovsky referred to Fet as one of the greatest lyricists, and Nekrásov's poetry as 'crawling on the ground'. K. Leóntiev was blunter: 'Nekrasov was simply a scoundrel ... and his work is tendentious, rude and of a deceitful insolence.' Rózanov, recalling Nekrásov's calls for young people to 'die without fail', exclaimed sadly: 'Oh, Nekrasov! Nekrasov !!! You walk ankle-deep in human blood!' And 'by what miracle did Nekrasov get into the great poets?' asked Nikoláy Kalyagin. {11}



It was left to the Russian Formalists to look objectively at Nekrásov's poetry, to see that poetic speech should be an end in itself, not a medium for conveying ideas and emotions. {12} The Formalists made countless studies of rhyme, metre, consonantal clusters, etc. of the Russian classics and of poems by contemporaries. Claiming, contrary to Symbolist assertions, that words and their connotations are not the most important ingredient of poetry, they replaced loose talk about inspiration and verbal magic by 'study of the laws of literary production'.

In essence, they were materialists and anti-traditionalists, who tried to reach some rapprochement with social and political concerns. At first their approach was somewhat mechanical, treating literature simply as an assembly of literary devices. Subsequently they investigated the interrelated of parts, an 'organic' approach. {12} Finally, in 1928, Tynyanov and Jakobson recast literature as a system where every component had a constructive function, just as the social fabric was a 'system of systems.' {13} But the short period of comparative tolerance of the early twenties changed as Stalinism tightened its grip, and the Formalists were obliged to recant, turn to novel writing, or flee abroad. That literature should not be subordinated to narrow Marxist concerns was occasionally hinted at in the succeeding thirty years, but an aesthetic divorced from socialism remained a heresy in the Soviet Union.

Among the Formalists, Victor Erlich, for example, noted that: {14}

'Nekrasov wrote "uncouth" poetry not because he was unable to to compose smooth, mellifluous verse, emulating the Pushkin-Lermontov pattern, but because he did not want to do so. . . In order to give Russian poetic language a new lease on life, Nekrasov had to push boldly beyond the Romantic tradition. Out of an unorthodox mixture of certain elements of Pushkin's and Lermontov's verse with motives and rhythms of vaudeville, folk songs and pamphleteering, he forged a new style which Turgenev, a Romantic "epigone", found much too spicy for his palate.'

K.I. Chukovsky saw Nekrasov as: {15}

'He was a genius of despondency. A magnificent funeral music sounded in his soul unceasingly, and to create meant to him to listen to that music and convey it to the people . . . The reason why Nekrasov's lyrics are so irresistible is that all his images . . . are permeated with the same emotions that he himself experiences. '

Marxist critics stressed the social purpose. A.V.

Lunacharsky wrote {16}

'Nekrasov is a *civic* poet, but he is a *civic poet*, and therein lies his strength . . . His lyricism is fervent, bitter, majestic and profound. His is a beautiful *soul* . . . His poems are equal to his ideas. Everybody understands them from the very beginning, everybody sings them — even illiterate peasants do. . . . Are Nekrasov's verses not smooth enough? But who has said that it is necessary to write in smooth verses about the horrors of peasant life?'

Critical opinion again changed with the fall of the Soviet Union, and was less complimentary. Kalyagin: {11}

'Nekrasov is studied at school today and is called a great poet. In former Russia, as it was before the February disaster, the writer Nekrasov was well known, but was not considered a major poet. All understanding people in Russia . . . always understood that the writer Nekrasov, adored by students and kursikhs, was not a poet at all.'

Even Dostoévsy, who had given a magnificent oration at Nekrasov's funeral, was dragged in:

'Nekrasov did not have a vulgar passion for "gold, luxury, pleasures," Dostoevsky explains. "No, rather it was a different character demon; it was the darkest and most humiliating demon. It was a demon of pride, a thirst for self-sufficiency, the need to protect oneself from people with a solid wall . . . I think this demon stuck to the heart of a child, a child of fifteen years old, who found himself on the St. Petersburg bridge, almost running away from his father... It was a thirst for a gloomy, gloomy, disconnected self-sufficiency, so as not to depend on anyone else.'" {11}

In the Soviet period, Nekrasov had naturally been seen as the herald of 'revolutionary democracy'. He represented 'the interests and aspirations of the working people'; he was 'the singer of the people's grief'; he represented common 'humanity'. Western critical theory has

subsequently added its own insights. {17} The poem can be analysed in Structuralist terms: Prokel's coffin is surrounded by snow, and Dar'ya wears a white kerchief, etc. Or the plot can be seen as an unconventional love triangle involving Dar'ya, her duties to husband Prokel and her attachment to a Russia exemplified by General Frost.

Again, it may be that the Dedication affords the master key, where mother is contrasted with father, and Nekrasov's sister is contrasted with her brother. From there, via an excursion into classical mythology, various polarities can be explored, which extend through all characters and all settings in the poem. I myself doubt that Nekrasov, with his narrow education, would have had such intentions, but readers may like to revisit the poem from these perspectives, which, like all academic criticism, add an extra depth to our appreciation of literary matters. {17}

Nekrásov, as many have remarked, was an excellent critic of others' work, but exhibited little capacity with respect to his own. That he was not a conscientious craftsman can hardly be denied, as the reader will see in looking through the prosody pages. Some departures from a strict metre — shown in brackets — serve the purpose of heightening the narrative, but others seem more metrical carelessness. But then, as always, Nekrásov had larger, more important aims than readability.

So is critical opinion, probably as divided today as it was in Nekrasov's time. {18} But to his admirers, Nekrásov is

incomparable, writing with intense humanity, often with biting satire and savage invective. In addition, and unappreciated at the time, he was also able to incorporate colloquialisms and slang into his verse, compose in loose ternary measures, and carry off such incongruous matters quite naturally. Readers must therefore make up their own minds. I've found Red-Nosed Frost does indeed live in the memory and make its own existence. The verse has little of the subtlety of Tyútchev and Fet, but no doubt contemporaries of Wordsworth also missed the grace and polish of Augustan verse. Readers today will also remember Eliot's *The Wasteland*, which incorporated matter not formerly the province of poetry. Indeed Eliot claimed, as a consequence of his reading of Baudelaire and others, that the Modernist way was to make poetry out of the hitherto unpoetic. That in essence was Nekrásov's achievement, fifty years before Eliot's experiments.

## Heritage of Nekrasov

Nekrásov had forerunners in poets like Iván Aksákov (1823-86) and Alexéy Mikháylovich Zhemchúzhnikov (1821-1908) but they are very tame beside Nekrásov himself. His influence continued in poets like Semën Yakovlevich Nadson (1862-87), Dmítry Nikoláyevich Sadovnikov (1843-83), Sergéi Eisenin (1895-1925) and Pável Vasiliev (1910-36), whom readers may like to look up. But the bucolic joie de vivre of the later poets is far from Nekrásov's gloom:

Esenin: The Herd of Horse {19}

On the green hills a herd of horses strays;  
Their nostrils blow the gold dust from the days.  
From the high hills to the blue water's reach  
They shake and drop their manes as black as pitch.

(First four lines. C.M. Bowra's translation)

Vasiliev: Natalya {20}

Guitars at evening, an infernal noise,  
but aren't the tractor-drivers splendid boys --  
washed, clean-shaven, with their caps askew?  
Life is happiness, so do not linger,  
take this ring, my love, from off my finger:  
my wedding ring it is, and wrought for you.

(Verse ten: my translation)

Russian society also changed. The accession of the domineering Alexander III after his father's assassination, unleashed a wave a reaction against all revolutionary activities. Publications were shut down and activists found themselves in the prison, exiled to Siberia, or abroad. When poetry became important again, indeed very important in Russia's silver age of poetry (1890-1920), its themes once again came from Europe, and echoed our own Modernism's preoccupations with the unconscious and language itself: Symbolism, Aceism, etc., often producing work more extreme than anything in English.

Nekrásov's work was therefore a development that went largely nowhere. Silver age poetry was broadly cerebral and anti-realist, as is our contemporary poetry today. There was much new material in Soviet life, in its political repression, collectivisation, the great famines and purges, but criticism was unwise and sometimes fatal. The literary

figures that disappeared in the Great Terror makes for sobering reading.

## Verse Matters

Red-Nosed Frost is written in ternary measures: amphibrachic trimeters for the most part, but dactylic trimeters for a central section between lines 559 and 835 inclusive.

The amphibrachic trimeter scans u-u u-u u-u for lines ending with a feminine rhyme (shown with an upper case letter in the prosody section) and u-u u-u u- for lines ending with a masculine rhyme (shown with a lower case letter in the prosody section).

The dactylic trimeter lines are not radically different, but simply lose the initial unstressed syllable. The feminine dactylic lines scan -u u-u u-u. The masculine lines scan -u u-u u-

The many irregular lines not adhering to these patterns are shown within brackets in the prosody pages.

Ternary rhythms pose several translation problems. Firstly, while amphibrachic measures are common in Russian poetry, they are decidedly uncommon in English. An additional problem is the line length. Trimeters are very

short and allow few of the circumlocution or word rearrangement needed to meet end-rhyme requirements. Those requirements become even more taxing with the feminine rhyme, which generally looks a little mannered or contrived in a language like English, poor in feminine rhymes.

That is not to say that closely-rhymed ternary lines cannot be reproduced in English, which the Ticknor publication (see below) indeed achieved. But to make something observing the graces of English poetry is exceedingly difficult. Here is J. S. Phillimore's translation of Nekrásov's *The Reaped Field* (second stanza) {22}

Кáжется, шéпчут колосья друг дрúгу:  
"Скúчно нам слúшать осéннюю выúгу,  
Скúчно склоня́ться до са́мой земл́и,  
Тúчные зёрна купа́я в пыли́!

Surely these cornstalks whisper one to another:  
`This Autumn wind, it has a weary sound:  
And weary work it is to sink and smother  
Good grain in dust by bending tops to ground.'

The rendering is pleasing, faithful, and even reproduces the ternary metre of the original, but the lines are in the more easily manipulated tetrameters. We should note how very different are these slow rhythms to the 'galloping' renderings below, but also wonder whether a thousand lines of such material would not be an intolerable burden on translator and reader.



## Previous Translations

There have been three previous translations, two complete and one (Chandler and Dralyuk {21}) of only the famous concluding section (much shortened, moreover: 218 original lines reduced to 96). All three are reasonably close renderings, employ a ternary rhythm, and render the feminine rhyme with a disyllable. One, the earliest, anonymous Ticknor publication, rhymes on the disyllable; the others do not. This first, duplicating the Russian rhyme scheme, is tour de force, capturing the sense well but not reading naturally as verse. The Soskine version is more free running — easy to read, but now rather dated in diction. The Chandler and Dralyuk rendering keeps less to an exact ternary rhythm, but has a more contemporary diction and some ingeniously deft rhyming.

For comparison purposes, we first glance at the prosody of the section introducing King Frost. The verse is in amphibrachic trimeters, though line 855 is a little irregular.

Не вéтер бушúет над бóром,	3A u-uu-uu-u
Не с гор побежáли ручьѝ,	3b u-uu-uu-
Морóз-воевóда дозóром	3A u-uu-uu-u
855. Обхóдит владенья своѝ.	3b (u-uu-u-)

Глядѝт — хорошó ли метéли	3C u-uu-uu-u
Леснѝе тропѝ занеслѝ,	3d u-uu-uu-
И нет ли где трéщины, щéли,	3C u-uu-uu-u
И нет ли где гóлой землѝ?	3d u-uu-uu-

A literal translation (a lightly-corrected machine code version) is:

Not the wind raging over the forest,  
Not from the mountains ran streams,  
The Frost-governor patrol  
855. Goes by his possessions.

Looks — well if blizzard  
Forest trails blocked up,  
And if there were any cracks, chinks,  
And if there were any bare earth?

In order of publication, the three renderings are:

Anonymous Ticknor 2nd Edition Emended: 1887 {23}

Not wind in the firs is it, howling;	3A u-uu-uu-u
No brooks rushing down to the plain;	3b u-uu-uu-
The Frost-chief the region is prowling,	3A u-uu-uu-u
Inspecting his princely domain.	3b u-uu-uu-

He looks: have the snow-storms well covered	3C u-uu-uu-u
And blocked up each path with a drift?	3d u-uu-uu-
Does nowhere the earth lie uncovered,	3C u-uu-uu-u
Is nowhere a chink or a rift?	3d u-uu-uu-

Juliet M. Soskice: 1929 {24}

It is not the wind in the tree tops	3x uu-u-uu-u
Nor streams rushing down to the plain.	3a u-uu-uu-
King Frost from his fastness approaches	3X u-uu-uu-u
To visit his icy domains.	3a u-uu-uu-

He looks — are the forest paths hidden?	3X u-uu-uu-u
The snow — has it diligent been	3b u-uu-uu-
And is there no crack and no hollow	3X u-uu-uu-u
No bare patch of earth to be seen?	3b uu-u-uu-

Robert Chandler and Boris Dralyuk. 2018 {21}

Not the autumn wind in the forest,  
not streams hurtling down to the plains –  
what we hear is Frost the Commander,  
patrolling his far-flung domains.

3X uu-u-uu-u  
3a u-uu-uu-  
3X uu-u-uu-u  
3a u-uu-uu-

Has snow been swept by the blizzards  
over every pathway and track?  
Is there any bare ground still showing,  
any last brown fissure or crack?

3X u-u-uu-u  
3b -uu-uu-  
3X uu-uu-u-u  
3b -u-u-uu-

Present Version: 2020

No winds to howl through forest ways,  
no rivers sweep through mountain chains:  
our General Frost patrols: his gaze  
855. traverses wintry, vast domains.

4a u-u-u-u-  
4b u-u-u-u-  
4a u-u-u-u-  
4b u-u-u-u-

He checks that blizzards have concealed  
all trace of earlier forest trails,  
that every crack and chink is sealed,  
a thickly-covered earth prevails.

4c u-u-u-u-  
4d u-u-u-u-  
4c u-u-u-u-  
4d u-u-u-u-

The rendering emphasises the sense of the original, that it's the power and majesty of the Frost that suspends natural processes. The rendering is also faithful to the English verse tradition, with lines rhymed, properly paced and rhythmically varied, but the ternary trimeters of the original Russian have been replaced by English iambic tetrameters, very different in style though similar in their number of syllable. Nekrásov's rhymes schemes and line length changes have also closely followed, but the feminine rhyme has been replaced by a masculine one throughout. The rendering also echoes style changes in the Russian, but does not register the change from amphibrachic to dactylic

metre because neither is suitable for extended poems in English.

There are reasons for these changes. As I see it, there remain three problems with the previous versions, accomplished though they are. One is that the ternary metre in English is inappropriate to the subject matter, imparting a rapid and inconsequential air to the narrative, suitable for children's verses but not for serious matters. It is generally hard for such verse to rise to the occasion in key sections:

The Ticknor publication: 1887

And nowhere so deep, unoppressed,  
Restfully breathes the tired breast  
And if we are ready to die,  
No fairer place there is to lie.

Soskice: 1929

And nowhere so light is the burden  
Of troubled and care-laden breast,  
While if we are weary of living  
No calmer abode is, of rest.

Present Version 2020

1041. Nowhere peace so generous,  
to deeper breathe the weary breast:  
if life has been enough for us,  
no sweeter place to take our rest.

The second is that, being written against the natural cadence of English words, there is little marriage of verse and content. The metre therefore seems something extraneous, not varying in a pleasing manner because linked to the sound and meaning of the words. The third problem is that, having been manhandled into making ternary rhythms (most obviously in Ticknor line 6, Soskice line 8 and Chandler & Dralyuk line 8 in the King Frost section), the words no longer offer the features that decent verse exploits, those sonic textures that give needed depths to meanings and make poetry out of ordinary words.

There are arguments for and against all translation approaches, but the crucial matter is the result, how the rendering pleases or doesn't please the reader. Since all previous translations are available on the Internet, gratis, readers can make their own choice.



# Appendix: Prosody

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Feminine rhyme shown with upper case letters, masculine with lower case. Metres of lines ending with feminine rhyme are u-uu-uu-u, masculine are -u-uu-uu-: all regular except where indicated in brackets.

Посвящаю моёй сестре́ Анне Алексе́евне.

Ты опять упрекну́ла меня́,	3а
Что я с му́зой моёй раздружи́лся,	3В
Что за́ботам теку́щего дня	3а
И заба́вам его́ подчини́лся.	3В

5. Для житёйских расчётов и чар	3с
Не расста́лся б я с му́зой моёю,	3D
Но бог весть, не пога́с ли тот дар,	3с
Что, быва́ло, дружи́л меня́ с не́ю?	3D (uu-uu-u--u)

Но не брат ещё́ лю́дям поёт,	3е
10. И терни́ст его́ путь, и непрóчен,	3F
Я умёл умёл не боя́ться клевет,	3е
Не́ был и́ми я сам озабо́чен;	3F

Но я знал, чьё во мра́ке ночно́м	3g
Надрывало́ся се́рдце с печа́ли,	3H
15. И на чью́ они́ грудь упада́ли свинцо́м,	3g
И кому́ они́ жизнь отравля́ли.	3H

И пуска́й они́ мимо́ прошли́,	3i
Надо́ мно́ю ходи́вшие гро́зы	3J
Зна́ю я, чьи моли́твы и слезы́	3J
20. Рокову́ю стрелу́ отвели́...	3i

Да и вре́мя ушло́,— я уста́л...	3к
Пусть я не́ был бойцо́м без упрёка,	3L
Но я си́лы в себе́ сознава́л,	3к
Я во мно́гое ве́рил глубоко́,	3l (uu-uu-uuu-)

## Appendix: Literal Translation

The literal rendering is a lightly-corrected machine translation.

Dedication: To my sister Anna Alexeyevna.

You reproached me again,  
That I have become friends with my Muse,  
What concerns the current day  
And to his amusements he obeyed.

5. For everyday calculations and charms  
I would not part with my Muse,  
But God knows, not extinguished whether the gift,  
That I used to be friends with her?

But not his brother more people the poet,  
10. And thorny his path, and fragile,  
I knew how not to be afraid of slander,  
They were not concerned about myself;

But I knew whose in the darkness of the night  
Breaking my heart with sadness,  
15. And on whose breast they fell like lead,  
And who is poisoned.

And let them pass by,  
Me went thunderstorms,  
I know whose prayers and tears  
20. The fatal arrow was withdrawn...

I'm tired...  
Let me not be a fighter without reproach,  
But I was aware of my strength,  
I believed in many things deeply,



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

25. А тепёрь — мне порá умира́ть...	3m
Не затём же пуска́ться в доро́гу,	3N
Что́бы в любящем се́рдце о́пять	3m
Пробудíть рокову́ю трево́гу...	3N
Присмирéвшую му́зу мою́	3o
30. Я и сам неохóтно ласка́ю...	3P
Я послéднюю пёсню пою́	3o
Для тебя́ — и тебе́ посвяща́ю.	3P
Но не б́удет она́ веселéй,	3q
Б́удет мно́го печальнее прéжней,	3R
35. Потому́ что на се́рдце темнéй	3q
И в грядúщем ещё безнаде́жней...	3R
Б́уря во́ет в саду́, б́уря ло́мится в дом,	3s (-u-uu-u-uu-)
Я бою́сь, чтоб она́ не сломíла	3T
Стáрый дуб, что поса́жен отцо́м,	3s (-uu-u-uu-)
40. И ту íву, что мать посади́ла,	3T
Эту íву, кото́рую ты	3u
С на́шей úчастью стра́нно связáла,	3V
На кото́рой поблёкли листы́	3u
В ночь, как бе́дная мать умира́ла...	3V
45. И дрожи́т и пестре́ет окно́...	3w
Чу! как круп́ные гра́дины ска́чут!	3X
Мíлый друг, поняла́ ты давно́ —	3w
48. Здесь одни́ то́лько ка́мни не пла́чут..	3X (uu--u-uu-u)

25. And now — me it is time die...  
Not the same on the road,  
In loving heart again  
To awaken a fatal alarm...

Subdued my Muse  
30. I'm reluctant to caress myself...  
The last song I sing  
For you — and you dedicate.

But it will not be more fun,  
There will be a lot sadder still,  
35. Because the heart is darker  
And even more hopeless in the future...

Storm howls in the garden, storm breaks into the house,  
I'm afraid it'll break  
The old oak, that planted father,  
40. And that willow my mother planted,

That willow you  
With our fate strangely tied,  
Where faded leaves  
The night the poor mother died...

45. And shaking and street window...  
Hark! as large hailstones jump!  
Dear friend, I got you a long time —  
48. Here alone only stones not crying...

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### Часть первая: СМЕРТЬ КРЕСТЬЯНИНА

#### I

Савраска увяз в половине сугроба, — 3Y  
50. Две пары промерзлых лаптей 3z (uu-u-uu-)  
Да угол рогожей покрытого гроба 3y (u-uu-uu-uu-)  
Торчат из убогих дровней. 3z

Старуха, в больших рукавицах, 3A  
Савраску сошла понукать. 3b (u-uuuu-)  
55. Сосульки у ней на ресницах, 3A  
С морозу — должно полагать. 3b

#### II

Привычная дума поэта 3C  
Вперёд забежать ей спешит: 3d  
Как саваном, снегом одета, 3C  
60. Избушка в деревне стоит, 3d

В избежке — теленок в подклети, 3E  
Мертвец на скамье у окна; 3f  
Шумят его глупые дети, 3E  
Тихонько рыдает жена. 3f

65. Сшивая проворной иголкой 3G  
На саван куски полотна, 3h  
Как дождь, зарядивший надолго, 3G  
Негромко рыдает она. 3h

Part one: DEATH OF A PEASANT

I

Roan stuck in middle snowdrift —  
50. Two pair of frozen bast shoes  
Corner of mat covered coffin  
stick out from poor sledge.

Old woman in big mittens  
got down to urge savraska  
55. Icicles on her eyelashes,  
with frost should believe.

II

The poet's habitual thought  
Forward to run her in a hurry:  
As a shroud, snow dressed,  
60. Hut in the village is,

In the hut — a calf in the basement,  
The dead man on the bench by the window;  
The noise of his stupid children,  
Quietly sobbing wife.

65. Nimble needle stitching  
On a shroud pieces of a cloth,  
Like rain, charged for a long time,  
She sobs softly.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### III

Три тяжкие доли имела судьба,	3i
70. И первая доля: с рабom повенчаться,	3J
Вторая — быть матерью сына раба,	3i
А третья — до гроба рабу покоряться,	3J
И все эти грозные доли легли	3k
На женщину русской земли.	3k
75. Века протекали — все к счастью стремилось,	3L
Все в мире по несколько раз изменилось,	3L
Одну только бог изменить забывал	3m (u--u-uu-uu-)
Суровую долю крестьянки.	3N
И все мы согласны, что тип измельчал	3m
80. Красивой и мощной славянки.	3N
Случайная жертва судьбы!	3o
Ты глухо, незримо страдала,	3P
Ты свету кровавой борьбы	3o
И жалоб своих не вверяла,—	3P
85. Но мне ты их скажешь, мой друг!	3q
Ты с детства со мною знакома.	3R
Ты вся — воплощенный испуг,	3q
Ты вся — вековая истома!	3R
Тот сердца в груди не носил,	3s
90. Кто слез над тобою не лил!	3s

### III

Three plights had fate,  
70. And first share: to marry slave,  
Second is to be mother of slave's son,  
And third — until coffin slave submit to,

And all these formidable shares fell  
On woman of Russian earth.

75. Century has elapsed — towards wanted fortune,  
Everything in world has changed several times,

One only God forgot to change  
Harsh lot of peasant woman.  
And all agree that type of decayed  
80. Beautiful and powerful Slav.

Random victim of destiny!  
You unheard, invisibly suffered,  
You are light of bloody struggle  
And your complaints not confided,—

85. But you will tell me, my friend!  
You've known me since you were a child.  
You're all embodied fear,  
You're all-century fatigue!

He heart not worn  
90. Who tears for you not shed,

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### IV

Одна́ко же речь о крестья́нке	3Т
Зате́яли мы, чтоб сказа́ть,	3и
Что тип велича́вой славя́нки	3Т
Возмо́жно и ны́не сыска́ть.	3и
95. Есть же́нщины в ру́сских селе́нях	3V
С spokóйною ва́жностью лиц,	3w
С краси́вою си́лой в движе́нях,	3V
С похóдкой, со взгля́дом царíц,—	3w
Их ра́зве слепóй не замéтит,	3X
100. А зря́чий о них говорíт:	3у
«Пройде́т — слóвно со́лнце осветíт!	3у (и- -и-иии-)
Посмо́трит — рублём подарíт!»	3у
Иду́т о́ни той же дорого́й,	3Z (и-и-ии-и)
Како́й весь наро́д наш иде́т,	3а
105. Но грязь обстано́вки убо́гой	3Z
К ним слóвно не ли́пнет. Цветёт	3а
Краса́вица, ми́ру на дíво,	3B
Румя́на, стройна́, высока́,	3с
Во вся́кой оде́жде краси́ва,	3B
110. Ко вся́кой рабо́те ловка́.	3с
И го́лод и хо́лод выно́сит,	3D
Всегда́ терпелíва, ровна́...	3е
Я ви́дывал, как она́ ко́сит	3D (и-ии-и-и)
Что взмах — то гото́ва ко́пна!	3е

## IV

But it's about a peasant woman  
We started to say,  
What type of stately Slav  
Perhaps and now find.

95. There are women in Russian villages  
With calm solemnity of countenance,  
With beautiful power in their movements,  
With the gait, with look of queens,—

Blind man cannot see them,  
100. Sighted of them says:  
«Will pass-as if sun will illuminate!  
Will look — ruble will bring!»

They walk the same way  
What all people we are,  
105. But mud of miserable situation  
doesn't seem to stick. Blooms

beauty, world wonder,  
rosy, slender, tall,  
In any clothes beautiful,  
110. In everything skilful.

And hunger and cold endure,  
Always patient, even...  
I've seen her mow,  
Sweep, the hay-cock ready!



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

115. Платок у ней на ўхо сбілся, Тогó гляді косы падўт. Какóй-то парнек изловчылся И квёрху подбрóсил их, шут!	3F 4g (u-u-u-u-) 3F 3g
Тяжёлые рýсые кóсы 120. Упáли на смýглую грудь, Покры́ли ей нóженьки бóсы, Мешáют крестья́нке взгляну́ть.	3H 3i 3H 3i
Она́ отвелá их рука́ми, На па́рня сердíто глядít. 125. Лицо́ велича́во, как в ра́ме, Смущенъем и гнёвом горít...	3J 3k 3J 3k
По б́удням не лю́бит безд́елья. Зато́ вам её не узна́ть, Как сгóнит улы́бка весéлья 130. С лица́ трудов́ую печáть.	3L 3m 3L 3m
Тако́го сердéчного смéха, И пéсни, и пля́ски тако́й За дéньги не кúпишь. «Утéха!» Тверд́ят мужикí меж собóй.	3N 3o 3N 3o
135. В игрé её кóнный не слóвит, В бедé — не сробéет,— спасёт; Коня́ на ска́ку останóвит, В горя́щую íзбу войдёт!	3P 3q 3P (u-u-uuu-u) 3q

115. Handkerchief was in her ear,  
That look braids will fall.  
Some kid got away with it.  
And threw them up, fool!

Heavy blond braids  
120. Fell on her dark chest,  
Covered her legs bare,  
Prevent peasant seeing.

She brushed them away with her hands,  
He glares at boy.  
125. The face is stately, as in a frame,  
Embarrassment and anger ablaze...

On weekdays, dislikes idleness.  
But you won't recognize her,  
How to drive a smile of fun  
130. On face toil-pressed seal.

Such hearty laugh,  
And songs, and dances such  
Money can't buy. «Joy!»  
Repeat peasants among themselves.

135. In game her horse does not catch,  
In trouble — gails not, will rescue;  
A galloping horse will stop,  
Burning hut will enter!

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Краси́вые, ро́вные зу́бы,	3R
140. Что крúпные пёрлы, у ней,	3s
Но стрóго румя́ные гу́бы	3R
Храня́т их красу́ от люде́й —	3s
Она́ улыба́ется ре́дко...	3T
Ей не́когда лясы то́чить,	3u
145. У ней не реш́ится сосéдка	3T
Ухва́та, горшка́ попроси́ть;	3u
Не жа́лок ей ни́щий убо́гий —	3V
Вольно́ ж без рабо́ты гуля́ть!	3w
Лежи́т на ней де́льности стрóгой	3V
150. И вну́тренней си́лы печáть.	3w
В ней я́сно и крéпко созна́нье,	3X
Что всё их спасéнье в труде́,	3y
И труд ей несёт воздая́нье:	3X
Семéйство не бьётся в нужде́,	3y
155. Всегда́ у них тёплая ха́та,	3Z
Хлеб вы́печен, вку́сен квасо́к,	3a
Здоровы́ и сы́ты ребя́та,	3Z
На пра́здник есть ли́шний кусо́к.	3a
Идёт э́та ба́ба к обе́дне	3B (u- -u-uu-u)
160. Пред все́ю семье́й впереди́:	3c
Сиди́т, как на сту́ле, двухле́тний	3B
Ребе́нок у ней на груди́,	3c
Рядко́м шестилéтного сы́на	3D
Наря́дная ма́тка веде́т...	3e
165. И по се́рдцу э́та карти́на	3D (uu-u-uu-u)
Все́м люба́щим ру́сский наро́д!	3e

Beautiful, even teeth,  
140. Like large pearls she has,  
But strictly red lips  
Keep their beauty from people —

She rarely smiles...  
She had no time to make jokes,  
145. Of her a neighbor no mind  
Grab onto pot to ask;

Not her wretched beggar poor —  
Willingly do without work for walk!  
Lying on her strong practicality  
150. And domestic forces the seal.

It is clear and strong consciousness,  
Everything of their salvation in work,  
And work carries reward:  
The family not struggling in poverty,

155. Always have them warm hut,  
Bread, delicious kvas,  
Healthy and fed children,  
There's an extra slice for holiday.

This woman is going to mass  
160. Before all family ahead:  
Sits, as on chair, two-year  
Child on her breast,

By side six-year-old son  
Well dressed leads...  
165. After heart this picture  
All who love Russian people!

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

V

И ты красотóю дивíла,	3F
Была́ и ловка́, и сильна́,	3g
Но го́ре тебя́ иссуши́ло,	3F
170. Усну́вшего Прокла́ жена́!	3g

Горда́ ты — ты пла́кать не хо́чешь,	3H
Крепи́шься, но холст гробовóй	3i
Слезáми невóльно ты мо́чишь,	3H
Сшивáя провóрной игло́й.	3i

175. Слезá за слезóй упада́ет	3J
На бы́стрые ру́ки твои́.	3k
Так ко́лос беззвúчно роня́ет	3J
Созре́вшие зёрна свои́...	3k

V

And you too with beauty astonished,  
Were skilful and strong,  
But grief has dried you up,  
170. Dear Prokl's wife!

Proud you do not want to cry,  
You're strong, but the grave linen  
You wet with involuntarily tears,  
Stitching with rapid needle.

175. Tear after tear falls  
fast on your hands.  
So the spike silently drops  
Its ripened grain ...

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### VI

В селé, за четы́ре версты́	3I
180. У це́ркви, где ве́тер шата́ет	3M
Подби́тые бу́рей кресты́,	3I
Местéчко стари́к выбира́ет;	3M
Уста́л он, рабо́та трудна́,	3n
Тут то́же сно́ровка нужна́ —	3n
185. Чтоб крест бы́ло ви́дно с доро́ги,	3P (uu-u-uu-u)
Чтоб со́лнце игра́ло круго́м.	3q
В снегу́ до колéн его́ но́ги	3P (u-uu-u--u)
В рука́х его́ за́ступ и лом,	3q (u-u--uu-)
Вся в и́нее ша́пка больша́я,	3R
190. Усы́, борода́ в серебрé.	3s
Недви́жно стои́т, размышля́я,	3R
Стари́к на вы́соком бугрэ́.	3s
Реши́лся. Кресто́м обознача́чил,	3T
Где бу́дет моги́лу копа́ть,	3u
195. Кресто́м осени́лся и нача́л	3T
Лопáтою снег разгребáть.	3u
Ины́е приёмы тут бы́ли,	3V
Кла́дбище не то, что по́ля	3W
Из сне́гу кресты́ выходи́ли,	3V
200. Крестáми ложи́лась земля́.	3w

## VI

In village, four versts away,  
180. At church, where wind shakes  
storm felled crosses,  
Place old man chooses;

He tired, work difficult,  
Here, too, skill needed —

185. That cross was in sight from roads,  
That sun may play around.  
In snow up to his knees his legs,  
In his hands spade and crowbar,

All in frost large cap,  
190. Moustache, beard in silver.  
Stands motionless, thinking,  
An old man on high mound.

He has decided. With cross outlined,  
Where to dig the grave,  
195. He has crossed himself and begun  
with spade to to shovel snow.

Other recipients there have been,  
The graveyard is not like fields:  
Crosses projected out of snow,  
200. Crosses lay on the ground.



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Согну́в свою́ ста́рую спи́ну,  
Он до́лго, приле́жно копа́л,  
И же́лтую ме́рзлую гли́ну  
То́тчас же снежо́к засти́лал.

3X (u-u- -uu-u)  
3y  
3X  
3y (-uuu-uu-)

205. Воро́на к нему́ подлетéла,  
Поты́кала но́сом, прошлáсь:  
Земля́ как желе́зо звенéла —  
Воро́на ни с чем убралáсь...

3Z  
3a  
3Z  
3a

Могíла на сла́ву гото́ва,—  
210. «Не мне б éту я́му копа́ть!  
(У ста́рого вы́рвалось сло́во.)  
Не Проклу бы в ней почивáть,

3B  
3c (uu-u-uu-)  
3B  
3c

Не Проклу!..» Ста́рик оступи́лся,  
Из рук егó вы́скользнул лом  
215. И в бе́лую я́му скати́лся,  
Ста́рик егó вы́нул с трудóм.

3D  
3e (u-u- -uu-)  
3D  
3e (u-u- -uu-)

Пошёл... по доро́ге шага́ет...  
Нет со́лнца, луна́ не возошла́...  
Как бу́дто весь мир умира́ет:  
220. Затíшье, снежо́к, полумгла́...

3F  
3g  
3F  
3g

Bending his old back,  
He dug long and hard,  
And yellow frozen clay  
Immediately snow covered.

205. Crow flew up to him,  
Poked his nose, was off:  
The earth rang like iron —  
Crow got away with nothing...

Grave suitably ready,—  
210. «Not for me this hole to dig!  
(The old man uttered a word.)  
Not Prokel should in it to rest,

Not Prokel!.."The old man stumbled,  
The crowbar slipped from his hand  
215. And in white hole rolled down,  
The old man took it out with difficulty.

Gone... walking down the road...  
No sun, no moon...  
It's like whole world is dying:  
220. Calm, snow, half-darkness..

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### VII

В овра́ге, у ре́чки Желту́хи, Стари́к свою́ ба́бу нагна́л И ти́хо спроси́л у стару́хи: «Хоро́ш ли гробок-то попа́л?»	3N 3i (u-u- -uu-) 3N 3i
225. Уста́ её чуть прошепта́ли В отве́т старику́: «Ничего́». Пото́м они́ о́ба молча́ли, И дро́вни так ти́хо бежали, Как бу́дто боя́лись чего́...	3J 3k 3J (u-u- -uu-u) 3J 3k
230. Деревня́ ещё не откры́лась, А бли́зко — мелька́ет огóнь. Стару́ха кресто́м осени́лась, Шара́хнулся в сто́рону конь,—	3L 3m 3L 3m
Без ша́пки, с нога́ми босы́ми, 235. С льши́м заостре́нным колóм, Внеза́пно предста́л пе́ред ни́ми Стари́нный знако́мец Па́хом.	3N 3o 3N (u-uu--u-u) 3o (u-uu-u-u)
Прикры́ты руба́хою же́нской, Звенели́ вери́ги на нем; 240. Посту́кал дура́к дереве́нский В моро́зную зе́млю колóм,	3P 3q 3P 3q

## VII

In ravine by river Zeltukha,  
old man caught up with his woman  
And quietly asked old woman:  
«Is coffin good one?»

225. Her lips barely whispered  
In response to old man: «So-so.»  
Then they both remained silent,  
And wood-sledge so quietly fled,  
As if afraid of something...

230. Village hasn't appeared yet,  
And close-flashes fire.  
The old woman made cross,  
The horse shied away,—

Without hat, with bare legs,  
235. With large pointed stake,  
Suddenly appeared before them  
old acquaintance Pakhom.

Covered with woman's shirt,  
Rattled chains on him;  
240. Knocked fool of village  
on frosty land with stake,

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Потóм помычáл сердобóльно,	3R
Вздохнóл и сказáл: «Не бедá!	3s
На вас он рабóтал довóльно,	3R
245. И вáша пришлá чередá!	3s
Мать сы́ну-то гроб покупáла,	3T
Отéц емú я́му копáл,	3u (u-u- -uu-)
Женá емú сáван сшивáла —	3T (u-u- -uu-u)
Всем рáзом рабóту вам дал!..»	3u
250. Опя́ть помычáл — и без цéли	3V
В прострáнство дура́к побежáл.	3w
Верíги уны́ло звенéли,	3V
И го́лые íкры блестéли,	3V
254. И по́сох по сне́гу черкáл.	3w

Then grunted compassionate,  
He sighed and said, «Never mind!  
He worked for you enough,  
245. And your turn has come!

Mother for son coffin had bought,  
His father dug a hole for him,  
His wife sewed his shroud —  
All at once made you work!..»

250. Again, grunted, and without purpose  
Into space fool ran.  
Chains sadly rang,  
Naked calves glistened,  
254. And staff on snow scribbled.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### VIII

255. У до́ма оста́вили кры́шу,	3X
К сосе́дке свелі́ ночева́ть	3у
Зазябнувших Ма́шу и Гры́шу	3X
И ста́ли сынка́ обряжа́ть.	3у
Медли́тельно, ва́жно, суро́во	3Z
260. Печа́льное де́ло вело́сь:	3а
Не ска́зано ли́шнего сло́ва	3Z
Нару́жу не вы́дано слёз	3а
Усну́л, потруді́вшийся в по́те!	3В
Усну́л, порабо́тав земле́!	3с
265. Лежи́т, неприча́стный забо́те,	3В
На бе́лом сосно́вом столе́,	3с
Лежи́т неподви́жный, суро́вый,	3D
С горя́щей свече́й в голо́вах,	3е
В широ́кой рубáхе холщóвой	3D
270. И в ли́повых но́вых лаптя́х.	3е
Больші́е, с мозо́лями ру́ки	3F
Подъя́вшие мно́го труда́,	3g (u-u-uu-)
Красі́вое, чу́ждое му́ки	3F
274. Лицо́ — и до рук борода́...	3g

## VIII

255. Against house left coffin lid,  
To neighbor brought to spend night  
Half frozen Masha and Grisha  
Began to dress little son.

Slowly, gravely, sternly  
260. Sad business was conducted:  
Does not say extra words,  
Outwardly not issued tears.

Asleep, toiling in sweat!  
Fell asleep, having worked earth!  
265. Lies, not sharing care,  
On white pine table,

Lying motionless, stern,  
With burning candle at head,  
In wide linen shirt  
270. In bast new shoes.

Large, calloused hands,  
Having done much work,  
Handsome, alien to pain  
274. face, beard reaches to hands...



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### IX

275. Пока мертвеца обряжали,	3N
Не выдали словом тоски	3i
И только глядеть избегали	3N
Друг другу в глаза бедняки.	3i
Но вот уже кончено дело,	3J (u-u- -uu-u)
280. Нет нужды бороться с тоской,	3k
И что на душе накопело,	3J
Из уст полилось рекой.	3k
Не ветер гудит по ковыли,	3I (u-uu-uuu-)
Не свадебный поезд гремит,—	3m
285. Родные по Прокле завыли,	3L
По Прокле семья голосит:	3m
«Голубчик ты наш сизокрылый!	3N
Куда ты от нас улетел?	3o
Пригожеством, ростом и силой	3N
290. Ты ровни в селе не имел,	3o
Родителям был ты советник,	3P
Работничек в поле ты был,	3q
Гостям хлебосол и приветник,	3P
Жену и детей ты любил...	3q
295. Что ж мало гулял ты по свету ?	3R
За что нас покинул, родной?	3s
Одумал ты думушку эту,	3R
Одумал с сырою землей,—	3s

## IX

275. While dead man was being dressed,  
Not give longing word  
And only look avoided,  
Poor people, look each other in eye.

But now it's over,  
280. There is no need to deal with grief,  
And that heart boiled,  
From mouth poured a river.

Not wind hums in the feather grass,  
Not a wedding train rattles,—  
285. Kindred of Prokel howled,  
For Prokel family cry:

«Dear you our gray-winged!  
Where did you go from us?  
Beauty, stature and strength  
290. You had no peer in village,

To parents were you counsellor,  
You were field worker,  
Guests welcome and welcome,  
You loved your wife and children...

295. Why didn't you walk in world enough?  
Why did you leave us, dear?  
Have you pondered this thought,  
Have you thought in damp earth,—

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Одумал — а нам оставаться	3T
300. Велёл во мiру; сиротам,	3U (u-u-uu-u)
Не свежей водо́й умыва́ться,	3T
Слезáми горю́чими нам!	3u
Стару́ха помрет со кручи́ны,	3V
Не жить и отцу́ твоemú,	3w
305. ереза в лесу́ без верши́ны —	3V
Хозя́йка без му́жа в до́му.	3W (u-uuu-u-u)
Её не жалéешь ты, бédной,	3X
Детéй не жалéешь... Вставáй!	3y
С полóски своéй заповéдной	3X
310. По лéту сберешь урожа́й!	3y
Сплесни́, ненаглядный, рука́ми,	3Z
Сокóльим глазкóм посмотри́,	3a
Тряхни́ шёлковыми кудря́ми,	3Z
Са́харны уста́ раствори́!	3a
315. На рáдости мы бы сварили	3B
И мёду, и бра́ги хмельно́й,	3c
За стол бы тебя́ посади́ли —	3B
Покúшай, желáнный, родно́й!	3C
А са́ми напрóтив бы ста́ли —	3D
320. Корми́лец, наде́жа семья́!—	3e
Оче́й бы с тебя́ не спуска́ли,	3D
322. Лови́ли бы рéчи твои́...»	3e

Changed his mind — and us remain  
300. told to the world; orphans,  
Not to wash with fresh water,  
With tears that burn us!

The old woman will die from sorrow,  
Not to live too your father,  
305. Birch in forest without tops —  
Housewife without husband in house.

You do not pity her, poor,  
children do not regret... Get up!  
From strip of your reserve  
310. You will take full harvest!

Claps hands, beloved one,  
Look with hawk's eye,  
Shake silk curls,  
Open sweet lips!

315. For joy we would brew  
mead and hop beer,  
We'd put you at table —  
Eat, welcome, dear!

And we would place opposite —  
320. Provider, hope of family!—  
Eyes would be on you,  
322. Catching your words...»

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

На э́ти рыда́нья и сто́ны	3F
Сосе́ди вали́ли гу́рьбой:	3g
325. Свечу́ положи́в у ико́ны,	3F
Твори́ли земны́е покло́ны	3F
И шли молчали́во домо́й.	3g
На сме́ну входили́ други́е.	3H
Но вот уж толпа́ разбрела́сь,	3i
330. Поу́жинать се́ли родны́е —	3H
Капу́ста да с хлебу́шком квас.	3i
Стари́к бесполе́зной кручи́не	3J
Собо́й овладе́ть не дава́л:	3k
Подла́дившись бли́же к лучи́не,	3J
335. Он ла́поть худо́й ковыря́л.	3k
Протя́жно и грóмко вздыха́я,	3L
Стару́ха на пе́чку легла́,	3m
А Да́рья, вдова́ молодáя,	3L
Прове́дать ребя́ток пошла́.	3m
340. Всю но́ченьку, сто́я у свечки́,	3N
Чита́л над усóпшим дьячо́к,	3o
И вто́рил ему́́ из-за пе́чки	3N (u-uu- -u-u)
Пронзи́тельным сви́стом сверчо́к.	3o

On these sobs and moans  
The neighbors came in droves:  
325. Putting a candle at icon,  
Did prostrations  
And walked silently home.

Others came in.  
But now crowd dispersed,  
330. Dinner sat down native —  
cabbage, some bread kvass.

The old man useless grief  
To take possession of him allowed not:  
Approaching nearer torch,  
335. He bast shoe plaited.

Long and loud sighing,  
The old woman lay down above stove,  
And Da'ya, widow young,  
To check on boys went.

340. All night, standing by candle,  
Read over deceased sexton,  
And echoed him from behind stove  
Shrill whistling cricket.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### XI

Сурóво метéлица вы́ла 3P  
345. И снёгом кидáла в окно́, 3q  
Невéсело со́лнце всходíло: 3P  
В то úтро свидéтелем бы́ло 3P  
Печáльной карти́ны оно́. 3q

Савра́ска, запряжённый в са́ни, 3R  
350. Пону́ро стоя́л у воро́т; 3s  
Без ли́шних рече́й, без рыда́ний 3R  
Покóйника вы́нес наро́д. 3s

— Ну, трóгай, саврасушка! трóгай! 3T  
Натя́гивай крéпче гужи́! 3u  
355. Служи́л ты хозя́ину мно́го, 3T  
В послéдний разо́к послужи́!.. 3u

В торго́вом селе́ Чистополье 3V  
Купи́л он теб́я сосункóм, 3w  
Взрасти́л он теб́я на привóлье, 3V  
360. И вы́шел ты до́брым конём. 3w

С хозя́ином дру́жно старáлся, 3X  
На зи́мушку хлеб запаса́л, 3y  
Во ста́де ребёнку дава́лся, 3X  
Травóй да мяки́ной пита́лся, 3X  
365. А те́ло изря́дно держáл. 3y

## XI

Severe blizzard howled  
345. And snow knocked at window,  
Sadly the sun rose:  
That morning the witness was  
sad picture it is.

A roan-drawn sleigh,  
350. stood dejectedly at gate;  
No more speeches, no more crying.  
dead man was carried by people.

— Well, move, roan, move!  
Pull tight traces!  
355. You have served owner much,  
Serve one last time!..

In market town Chistópolis  
He bought you as suckling colt,  
He raised you in abundance,  
360. And you came out good horse.

Worked friendly with master,  
with winter bread laid up,  
To herd child was given,  
On grass and chaff was fed,  
365. And body kept in good condition.



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Когда же работы кончались	3Z
И скóвывал зéмлю морóз,	3a
С хозяином вы отправлялись	3Z
С домашнего кóрма в извóз.	3a
370. Немáло и тут доставáлось —	3B
Возíл ты тяжёлую кладь,	3c
В жестóкую бúрю случáлось,	3B
Измучась, дорóгу теря́ть.	3c
Видна́ на бока́х твои́х впáлых	3D (u-uu-u--u)
375. Кнутá не одна́ полосá,	3e
Зато́ на двора́х постоя́лых	3D
Покúшал ты ввóлю овса́.	3e
Слы́хал ты в январские но́чи	3F
Метéли пронзíteльный вой	3g
380. И вóлчьи горя́щие о́чи	3F
Вида́л на опу́шке лесно́й,	3g
Продрóгнешь, натéрпишься стра́ху,	3H
А там — и о́пять ничегó!	3i
Да, ви́дно, хозя́ин дал ма́ху —	3H
385. Зимá доконáла егó!..	3i

When the work ended  
And frost bound earth,  
With the master you went  
From home feed to haulage.

370. Much was your share —  
you carried heavy load,  
In violent storm it happened,  
Exhausted, the road you lost.

Visible on your sunken flanks  
375. not one lash of whip,  
But in inns  
You ate plenty of oats.

You heard on January nights  
Blizzard piercing howl  
380. And wolf's burning eyes  
saw on edge of forest,

You'll get cold, will get scared,  
And there — and again nothing!  
Yes, apparently, the owner made mistake —  
385. Winter has killed him!..

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

386. Случилось в глубоком сугробе	3J
Полсуток ему простоять,	3k
Потом то в жару, то в ознобе	3J
Три дня за подвóдой шагáть:	3k
390. Покóйник на срок торопился	3L
До мéста доставить товáр.	3m
Доставил, домой воротился —	3L
Нет гóлосу, в тéле пожáр!	3m
Старуха его окатила	3N
395. Водой с девяти веретён	3o
И в жаркую баню сводила,	3N
Да нет — не поправился он!	3o
Тогда ворожеек созвали —	3P
И поят, и шéпчут, и трут —	3q
400. Все худо! Его продевали	3P
Три рáза сквозь потный хомут,	3q

386. It happened in deep snowdrift  
Half day to him to stand,  
Then in fever, then in chill  
Three days to walk after cart:

390. Deceased on time hurried  
To place to deliver goods.  
Delivered, returned home —  
There is no voice, body on fire!

Old woman doused him  
395. Water from nine spindles  
And to hot bath drove,  
No: he did not recover!

Then soothsayers were summoned —  
And drink, and whisper, and rub —  
400. All bad! He was dragged  
Three times through sweaty collar,

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Спуска́ли роди́мого в пролу́бь,                   3R  
Под ку́ричий кла́ли насéст...                   3s  
Все́му покоря́лся, как голу́бь,—               3R (u-uu-uuu-)  
405. А пло́хо — не пьёт и не ест!           3s

Ещё положи́ть под медве́дя,                   3T  
Чтоб тот е́му ко́сти размя́л,                   3u (u-u-uu-)  
Ходéбщик сергачевский Фе́дя —               3T  
Случи́вшийся тут — предлага́л.               3u

410. Но Да́рья, хозяйка больно́го, 3V  
Прогнала́ сове́тника прочь;                   3w (uu-u-uu-)  
Испро́бовать сре́дства ино́го                   3V  
Задума́ла ба́ба: и в ночь                       3w

Пошла́ в монасты́рь отдалённый               3X  
415. (Вёрстах в десяти́ от селá),               3y  
Где в не́кой ико́не явлéнной               3X  
Целе́бная си́ла была́.                         3y

Пошла́, вороти́лась с ико́ной —               3Z  
Больно́й уж безгла́сен лежа́л,               3a  
420. Оде́тый как в гроб, причащённый.       3Z  
Уви́дел жену́, простонал                       3a

422. И умер...                                       3B (u-u)

Lowered into ice hole,  
Under the hen laid roost...  
He submitted to everything like dove,—  
405. And bad — does not drink or eat!

To put under the bear,  
In order that his bones stretched,  
Sergach peddler Fyodor —  
What happened here, proposed.

410. But Dar'ja, the patient's wife,  
Drove away adviser;  
Try means different  
Woman conceived: and at night

Went to monastery remote  
415. (Ten versts from village),  
Where certain icon is shown|  
Healing power existed.

Went, came back with icon —  
The patient already speechless,  
420. Dressed as for coffin, received communion.  
Looked at wife, moaned

422. And died...

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

422. ...Саврасушка, трóгай, Натягивай крѣпче гужі!	3B (u-uu-u) 3c
Служіл ты хозяину мно́го, 425. В послѣдний разóк послужи!	3B 3c
Чу! два похорóнных удáра! Попы́ ожида́ют — иди́!..	3D 3e
Убítaя, скóрбная па́ра, Шли мать и отѣц впереди́.	3D 3e
430. Ребáта с покóйником óба Сидѣли, не смѣя рыдáть, И, прáвя саврáской, у грóба С вожжáми их бѣдная мать	3F 3g 3F 3g
Шагáла... Глазá её впáли, 435. И был не белѣй её щѣк Надѣтый на ней в знак печáли Из бѣлой холсти́ны платóк.	3H 3i 3H 3i
За Дáрьей — сосѣдей, сосѣдок Плелáсь негустая толпá, 440. Толкúя, что Прокловых дѣток Тепѣрь незави́дна судьба́,	3J 3k 3J 3k
Что Дáрье рабóты прибóдет, Что ждóт её чѣрные дни. «Жалѣть её нѣкому бóдет»,— 445. Соглáсно реши́ли они́...	3M 3n 3M 3n

422. ...Good roan move on,  
Pull tight traces!  
You have served owner much,  
425. Serve one last time!

Hark! two funeral bells!  
Priests expecting - go!..  
Overwhelmed, sorrowful couple,  
Went mother and father ahead.

430. The children with dead man both  
Sat, not daring to weep,  
And, guiding roan, the coffin  
With reins their poor mother

Walked... Her eyes sunken,  
435. And was not whiter than her cheeks  
Worn by her as sign of sorrow  
white linen headscarf.

Behind Daria men-neighbors, women-neighbors  
The crowd was thin,  
440. Interpreting of Prokel's children  
Now the unenviable fate,

That Dar'ja's work will arrive,  
dark days wait for her  
«There will be no one to pity her»,—  
445. According decided they...

.



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### XIV

446. Как вóдится, в я́му спусти́ли,	3O
Засы́пали Прокла землѣй;	3p
Попла́кали, грóмко повы́ли,	3O
Семью́ пожалéли, почтили	3O
450. Покóйника щéдрой хвалóй.	3p
Сам стáроста, Сидор Ива́ныч,	3Q
Вполгóлоса ба́бам подвы́л	3r
И «мир тебе́, Прокл Севастьяныч!—	3Q
Сказáл,— благоду́шен ты был,	3r
455. Жил чéстно, а глáвное: в срóки,	3S
Уж как тебя́ бог выруча́л,	3t (u-u-uuu-)
Плати́л господи́ну обрóки	3S
И подáть царю́ представля́л!»	3t (uu-u-uu-)
Истрáтив запáс красноречья́,	3U
460. Почтéнный мужи́к покряхтёл:	3v
«Да, вот она́ жизнь челове́чья!»—	3U (u-u-uuu-u)
Приба́вил — и ша́пку надéл.	3v

## XIV

446. As usual, in pit lowered,  
Covered Prokel with earth;  
Cried, loud howling,  
The family wished to honor  
450. deceased with generous praise.

Himself starost chief, Sidor Ivánovich,  
In low voice to women lamented  
And «Peace be with you, Prokel Sevastiánych!—  
Said, — kind you were,

455. Lived honestly, and importantly: in good time,  
Oh how God helped you out,  
Paid the lord's dues  
And submitted to the landlord's tax!»

Having spent stock of eloquence,  
460. Worthy peasant grunted:  
«Yes, this is human life!»—  
Added — and put on his cap.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

«Свали́лся... а то́-то был в си́ле!..	3W
Сва́лимся... не мину́ть и нам!..»	3у (-uuu-uu-)
465. Ещё покрести́лись моги́ле	3W
И с бо́гом пошли́ по дома́м.	3у
Высо́кий, седо́й, сухопа́рый,	3Z
Без ша́пки, недви́жно-немо́й,	3а
Как па́мятник, де́душка ста́рый	3Z
470. Стоя́л на моги́ле родно́й!	3а
Пото́м старина́ борода́тый	3В
Задви́гался ти́хо по ней,	3с
Ровня́я земли́цу лопáтой	3В
Под во́пли стару́хи свое́й.	3с
475. Когда́ же, оста́вивши сы́на,	3D
Он с ба́бой в дере́вню входи́л:	3е
«Как пья́ных, шата́ет кручи́на!	3D
478. Гляди́-тко!..» — наро́д говори́л.	3е

«He fell... and when he had strength!..  
We shall fall... and as we must!..»  
465. They crossed themselves at grave  
And with God went on to homes

Tall, grey, gaunt,  
Bareheaded, motionless and mute,  
As monument, grandfather old  
470. Stood at grave!

Then old bearded  
Moved quietly on it,  
Levelling the earth with shovel  
With cries of old woman.

475. When, having left son,  
He entered the village with woman:  
«Like a drunk reeling grief!  
478. Look!.." — people said..

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

А Дáрья домóй воротíлась —	3F
480. Прибрáться, детéй накормíть.	3g
Ай-ай! Как избá настудíлась!	3F
Торóпится печь затопíть,	3g
Ан глядь — ни полена дровíшек!	3H
Задúмалась бédная мать:	3i
485. Поки́нуть ей жаль ребяти́шек,	3H
Хотéлось бы их приласкáть,	3i
Да врéмени нéту на лáски,	3J
К сосéдке свелá их вдовá,	3k
И тóтчас на том же саврáске	3J
490. Поéхала в лес, по дровá...	3k

And Dar'ja returned home —  
480. to dress herself, feed children.  
Ay-ay! How cold the hut has become;  
she hastens to heat the stove.

But see, not log of firewood!  
Thought poor mother:  
485. She felt sorry for children,  
Would like to caress them,

Yes, there is no time for caressing,  
Their widow took them to neighbor,  
And immediately on same roan  
490. Went into woods for firewood...

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Часть вторая: МОРОЗ, КРАСНЫЙ НОС

### XVI

491. Морóзно. Равни́ны белéют под снéгом, 4L (u-uu-uu-uu-u)

Чернёется лес впереди́, 3m

Савра́ска плетётся ни ша́гом, ни бéгом, 4L (u-uu-uu-u)

Не встрéтишь души́ на пути́. 3m

495. Как т́ихо! В дере́вне разда́вшийся го́лос 4N (u-uu-uu-uu-uu-)

Как б́удто у са́мого у́ха гудёт, 3o

О ко́рень древе́сный запну́вшийся по́лоз 4N (u-uu-uu-uu-u)

Стучи́т и визжи́т, и за се́рдце скребёт. 4o (u-uu-uu-uu-)

Круго́м — поглядéть нéту мочи́, 4P (u-uu--uu-)

500. Равни́на в алма́зах блести́т... 3q

У Дáрьи слезáми напóлнились óчи — 4P (u-uu-uu-uu-)

Должно́ быть, их со́лнце слепи́т... 3q

Part two: FROST, RED NOSE

XVI

491. Frosty. The plains white under snow,  
Black forest ahead,  
Roan crawls not walk not run,  
Not meet souls on way.

495. How quiet! Voice from village  
As if at very ear buzz,  
About root wood sled runner  
Knocks and squeals and grates at heart.

Around to look impossible,  
500. Plain glitters with diamonds...  
Dar'ja's eyes filled with tears —  
Them sun must be blinding...



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### XVII

503. В полях было тихо, но тише В лесу и как будто светлей.	3S (u- -uu-u) 3t
505. Чем дале — деревья всё выше, А тени длинней и длинней.	3S 3t
Деревья, и солнце, и тени, И мёртвый, могильный покой... Но — чу! заунывные пёни, 510. Глухой, сокрушительный вой!	3U 3v 3U 3v
Осылило Дарьюшку горе, И лес безучастно внимал, Как стоны лились на просторе, И голос рвался и дрожал,	3W 3x 3W (u-u-uuu-u) 3x (u-u-uuu-)
515. И солнце, кругло и бездушно, Как жёлтое око совы, Глядело с небес равнодушно На тяжкие мучки вдовы.	3Y (u-u-uuu-u) 3z 3Y 3z
И много ли струн оборвалось 520. У бедной крестьянской души, Навеки сокрыто осталось В лесной нелюбимой глуши.	3A 3b 3A 3b
Великое горе вдовицы И матери малых сирот 525. Подслушали вольные птицы, Но выдать не смели в народ...	3C 3d 3C 3d

## XVII

503. Fields were quiet, but quieter  
in forest and as if brighter.

505. Than far — all trees were higher,  
And shadows long and long.

Trees and sun and shadows,  
And death-like, sepulchral peace...  
But — Hark! mournful chidings,  
510. dull, shattering howl!

Grief has mastered Dar'iûška,  
And forest listened impartially,  
As moans poured on open space,  
And voice was torn and trembled,

515. And the sun, round and soulless,  
Like yellow eye of owl,  
Looked down from heaven indifferently  
Upon heavy pangs of widow.

And whether many strings broke  
520. in poor peasant soul,  
Forever have remained hid  
In forest savage wilderness.

Great grief of widow  
And mothers of small orphans  
525. Overheard free birds,  
But to tell people they have not dared...

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### XVIII

527. Не псарь по дубрѡвушке трубѣт, Гогѡчет, сорвиголовá,—	3E 3f
Наплáкавшись, кѡлет и рѣбит	3E
530. Дровá молодáя вдовá.	3f
Срубѣвши, на дрѡвни бросáет —	3G
Напѡлнить бы их поскорѣй,	3h
И вряд ли самá замечáет,	3G
Что слѣзы всё льют из очѣй:	3h
535. Инáя с ресни́цы сорвѣтся	3J
И на снег с размáху падѣт —	3k
До сáмой земли́ доберѣтся,	3J
Глубѡкую ямку прожжѣт;	3k
Другѣю на дѣрево кѣнет,	3L
540. На плáшку,— и смѡтришь, онá	3m
Жемчѣужиной крупнѡй засты́нет —	3L
Белá, и круглá, и плотнá.	3m
А та на глазѣ поблистáет,	3N
Стрелѡй по щекѣ побежѣт,	3o
545. И сѡлнышко в ней поиграѣт...	3N
Упрáвиться Дáрья спешѣт,	3o
Знай, рѣбит,— не чѣвствует стѣжи,	3P
Не слы́шит, что нѡги знобѣт,	3q
И, пѡлная мѣслью о мѣже,	3P
550. Зовѣт егѡ, с ним говорѣт...	3q (u-u-uuu-)

## XVIII

527. No huntsman through wood blows on horn,  
Turning, daredevil,—  
Having ceased to wail cuts and splits  
530. Wood young widow.

Having cut wood on wood-sledge throws —  
To fill it quickly,  
And she unlikely to notice,  
That tears all pour from eyes:

535. Some from eyelashes break  
And on snow with force will fall —  
Till ground will get,  
Burn deep hole;

Another on wood drop,  
540. On log — you see it  
Pearl large petrified —  
White, and round, and dense.

And that eye will glisten,  
An arrow on cheek will run,  
545. And the sun will play in it...  
To manage Daria in hurry,

Know, cuts — not feeling cold,  
Doesn't hear feet cold,  
And, full of thoughts of her husband,  
550. Calls him, talking to him...

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

.....

.....

«Голубчик! красавицу нашу	3R
Весной в хороводе опять	3s
Подхватят подруженьки Машу	3R
И станут на ручках качать! »	3s

- - - - -

## Amphibrachic Dimeter

555. Станут качать,	2T (-uu-)
Кверху бросать,	2U (-uu-)
Маковкой звать,	2T (-uu-)
Мак отряхать!	2U (-uu-)

- - - - -

## Dactyllic Trimeter

(Feminine: -uu-uu-u Masculine:-uu-uu- Regular except where indicated.)

Вся раскраснётся наша	3V i.e. (-uu-uu-u)
560. Маковым цветиком Маша	3V i.e. (-uu-uu-u)
С синими глазками, с русой косой!	3W i.e. (-uu-uu-u)

Ножками бить и смеяться	3X i.e. (-uu-uu-u)
Будет... а мы-то с тобой,	3w i.e. (-uu-uu-)
Мы на неё любоваться	3X i.e. (-uu-uu-u)
565. Будем, желанный ты мой!.. »	3w i.e. (-uu-uu-)

.....

.....

«Dear fellow! our beauty  
in Spring in round dance again  
Friends will catch up Masha  
Begin in hands to toss!

555. Will begin to toss,  
upwards to throw,  
poppy heads to call,  
poppy to shake out

All red will blush our  
560. Masha as little poppy flower  
With eyes blue, with blond braid!

Tap feet and laugh  
She will... and we are with you,  
We admire her  
565. We will welcome you... »

## Dactyllic Trimeter

XX

Умер, не дожёл ты вёку, Умер и в зёмлю зарыт! Любо весной человеку, Солнышко ярко горит.	3Y (u-uu-u-u) 3z 3Y 3z
570. Солнышко всё оживило, Божьи открылись красы, Поле сохи запросило, Травушки просят косы,	3A 3b 3A 3b
Рано я, горькая, встала, 575. Дома не ела, с собой не брала, До ночи пашню пахала, Ночью я косу клепала, Утром косить я пошла...	3C 4d (-uu-uu-uu-) 3C 3C 3d
Крепче вы, ноженьки, стойте! 580. Белые руки, не нойте! Надо одной попеть!	3E 3E 3f
В поле одной-то надсадно, В поле одной неповадно, Стану я милого звать!	3G 3G 3f
585. Ладно ли пашню вспахала? Выди, родимый, взгляни! Сухо ли сено убрала? Прямо ли стоги сметала?.. Я на граблях отдыхала 590. Все сенокосные дни!	3H 3i 3H (-uu-uuu-) 3H 3H (-u-uuu-u) 3i
Некому бабью работу поправить! Некому бабу на разум наставить.	4J (-uu-uu-uu-u) 4J (-uu-uu-uu-u)

XX

Died, not lived to see your span,  
Dead and in earth buried!  
Pleasure in spring for man,  
sun is shining brightly.

570. Sunshine revived,  
God's revealed beauties,  
Field plough requested,  
Grass asks for scythe,

I in sadness got up,  
575. At home did not eat with me did not take,  
Till night plowed field plowed,  
At night I riveted scythe,  
In morning I went to mow...

Stronger stand your legs!  
580. White hands don't complain!  
Must go alone!

In field alone tiresome,  
In the field alone unpleasant,  
I'll call dear one!

585. Have I ploughed well?  
Come out, darling, look!  
Have I got in hay dry?  
Have I pile up haycock erect?..  
I rested on rake

590. All hay making days!

No one to correct work by woman!  
No one to instruct woman on reason.



## Dactyllic Trimeter

### XXI

Стáла скотíнушка в лес убирáться, 4K (-uu-uu-uu-u)  
Стáла рожь-мáтушка в кóлос метáться,4K (-uu-uu-uu-u)

595. Бог нам послáл урожáй! 3I  
Нýнче солóма по грудь челóвеку, 3M  
Бог нам послáл урожáй! 3I  
Да не продлil тебе вéку,— 3M (-uu-u--u)  
Хóчешь не хóчешь, однá поспева́й!.. 4I (-uu-uu-uu-)

600. Овод жужжít и кусáет, 3N  
Смёртная жáжда томít, 3o  
Сóльнышко серп нагревáет, 3N  
Сóльнышко óчи слепít, 3o

Жжёт онó гóлову, плéчи, 3P (-u- -uu-u)  
605. Нóженьки, рúченьки жжёт, 3q  
Изо ржи, слóвно из пéчи, 3P  
Тóже теплóm обдаёт, 3q

Спíнушка нóет с натúги, 3R  
Рúки и нóги боля́т, 3s  
610. Крáсные, жёлтые кругí 3R  
Пéред очáми стоя́т... 3s

Жни-дожина́й поскорéе, 3T  
Вíдишь — зерно́ потекло́... 3u  
Вмéсте бы дéло спорéе, 3T  
615. Вмéсте повадней бы шло... 3u

XXI

Little herd has begun to go to forest,  
Mother rye has begun to devote herself to ear,

595. God has sent us abundant harvest!  
Now straw to the chest of man,  
God has sent us abundant harvest!  
Yes, but not for you long life,—  
Like it or not, alone hasten!..

600. Gadfly buzzes and bites,  
Deadly thirst torments,  
Sun heats sickle,  
Sun is blinding eyes,

Burns head, shoulders,  
605. Legs, hands burning,  
Out of rye, as if from furnace,  
Also is pouring heat,

Back aches with the strain,  
Arms and legs hurt,  
610. Red, yellow circles  
Before eyes stand...

Finish harvest more quickly,  
See — grain flowed...  
Together would it go more quickly,  
615. Together it would have gone more pleasant...

## Dactyllic Trimeter

### XXII

Сон мой был в рúку, родная!	3V
Сон пéред спасовым днём.	3w (u-uuuu-)
В пóле засну́ла одна́ я	3V
Пóсле полудня, с серпóм;	3w
620. Вíжу — меня́ оступает	3X
Сíла — несмётная рать,—	3y
Грóзно рука́ми маха́ет,	3X
Грóзно очáми сверка́ет.	3X
Дúмала я убежа́ть,	3y
625. Да не послу́шались но́ги	3Z
Ста́ла проси́ть я помоги́,	3z (-uu-uuu-)
Ста́ла я грóмко крича́ть.	3y
Слы́шу, земля́ задрожáла —	3A
Пéрвая мать прибежа́ла,	3A
630. Тра́вушки рвúтся, шумя́т —	3b
Дéтки к роди́мой спешáт.	3b
Ши́бко без вéтру не ма́шет	3C
Мельница в пóле крыло́м:	3d
Бра́тец идёт да приляжет,	3C
635. Свёкор плетётся шажко́м.	3d

XXII

My dream has come to pass, dear me!  
Dream before Christ's day.  
I fell asleep alone in field  
In afternoon, with sickle;

620. I see — surrounds me  
a host, a numberless power,—  
It waves his arms menacingly,  
Menacing with eyes it glares.

I thought to run away,  
625. But limbs did not obey.  
I began to beg for help,  
I began to cry aloud.

I hear ground tremble —  
First mother came running,  
630. Rye is broken, rustles —  
Children to dear one hasten.

Quickly without wind waves not  
Windmill in field arm:  
Brother goes to lie down,  
635. Father-in-law creeps with short step.

## Dactyllic Trimeter

Всё прибредли́, прибежа́ли,  
То́лько дружка́ одногó  
Очи мо́й не видáли...  
Стáла я кли́кать егó:

3E  
3f  
3E  
3f

640. «Видишь, меня́ оступает  
Сíла — несмётная рать,—  
Грóзно рука́ми маха́ет,  
Грóзно очáми сверка́ет:  
Что не идёшь выруча́ть?..»

3G  
3h  
3G  
3G  
3h

645. Тут я кругóм огляд́елась —  
Гóсподи! Что куда́ делóсь?

3I  
3I (-uu-u--u)

Что это бы́ло со мной?  
Рáти тут нет никакóй!

3j (u- -uu-)  
3j

Э́то не лю́ди лихíе,  
650. Не бусурманская рать,  
Э́то колосья ржаны́е,  
Спéлым зерно́м налиты́е,  
Вы́шли со мной воева́ть!

3K  
3I  
3K  
3K  
3I

All came slowly, quickly,  
Only one friend  
My eyes have not seen...  
I began to call him:

640. «You see, surrounding me  
power of great host,—  
It beckons with arms menacingly,  
Menacing its eyes glare:  
Why aren't you helping out?..»

645. Then I looked around —  
Lord! What happened?

What was wrong with me?  
There no army here!

These no wicked people,  
650. Not Muslim army,  
This rye heads,  
Ripe grain filled,  
Come to fight with me!

## Dactyllic Trimeter

Мáшут, шумя́т; наступа́ют,	3M
655. Ру́ки, лицó щекотят,	3n
Са́ми солóму под серп нагиба́ют —	3M
Бо́льше стоя́ть не хотя́т!	3n
Жать приняла́сь я прово́рно,	3O
Жну, а на ше́ю мою́	3p
660. Сы́плются крúпные зёрна —	3O
Сло́вно под гра́дом стою́!	3p
Вы́течет, вы́течет за ночь	3Q
Вся на́ша ма́тушка-рожь...	3r
Где же ты, Прокл Севастьяныч?	3Q
665. Что пособи́ять не идёшь?..	3r
Сон мой был в ру́ку, родна́я!	3S
Жать тепе́рь бу́ду одна́ я.	3S (-u- -uu-u)
Ста́ну без ми́лого жать,	3t
Сно́пики крúпно вяза́ть,	3t
670. В сно́пики слёзы роня́ть!	3t
Слёзы мой не жемчу́жны,	3U
Слёзы го́рошки-вдо́вы,	3V(-u-uu-u)
Что же вы го́споду ну́жны,	3U
Чем ему́ до́роги вы?..	3v (-u- -uu-)

They wave, they rustle, beat against  
655. hands and tickle face.  
Themselves stalks under sickle bend  
more do not want to stand!

Harvesting I begin quickly  
I reap and on my neck  
660. pour large grains  
As if under hail I stood.

Will run out, run out for night,  
all our mother rye.  
Where are you Prokel Sevastiánych  
665. Why don't you come to help?

The dream has come to pass, dear me,  
I shall be the one to reap.

I shall without the dear one reap  
Little sheaves shall bind  
670. On the sheaves tears drop.

My tears are not pearls  
tears of a sorrowing widow.  
What does God need you for,  
what value are you to him?



## Dactyllic Trimeter

### XXIII

675. Дóлги вы, зíмние нóченьки,	3W
Скúчно без мíлого спать,	3x
Лишь бы не плáкали оченьки,	3W
Стáну полóтна я ткать.	3x
Мнóго наткú я полóтен,	3Y
680. Тóнких добрóтных новín,	3z
Вýрастет крéпок и плóтен,	3Y
Вýрастет лáсковый сын.	3z
Бúдет по нáшему мéсту	3A
Он хоть кудá женихóм,	3b
685. Вýсватать пáрню неvéсту	3A
Свáтов надёжных пошлём...	3b
Кúдри самá расчесáла я Грíше,	4C (-uu-uu-uu-u)
Крoвь с молoкóм наш сынóк-пéрвенец,	4d (-uu-uu- -u-)
Крoвь с молoкóм и неvéста... Идí же!	4C (-uu-uu-uu-u)
690. Благословí молодýх под венéц!..	4d (-uu-uu-uu-)
Этого дня мы, как прáздника, ждáли,	4E
Пóмнишь, как нáчал Гришуха ходíть,	4f
Цéлую нóченьку мы толковáли,	4E
Как егó бúдем женíть,	4f (-u- -uu-)
695. Стáли на свáдьбу копíть понемнóгу...	4G
Вот — дождáлись, слáва бóгу!	4G (-u-u-u-u)
Чу, бубенцы́ говорят!	3h
Пóезд вернóлся назáд,	3h
Выди навстрéчу провóрно —	3I
700. Пáва-неvéста, сокóлик-женíх!—	4j
Сыпь на них хлéбные зёрна,	3I
Хмéлем осыпь молодýх!..	3j

XXIII

675. Long winter night  
lonely without loved one  
would eyes not weep  
I will linen weave.

Much will I weave of linen  
680. Good fine new cloth  
will grow up fine and strong  
will grow up loving son.

Will be for our place  
He likely groom,  
685. Get young man a bride  
We'll send for trusty matchmakers.

I have combed Grisha's curls  
Blood with milk our firstborn son,  
Blood and milk also bride... Go now!  
690. Bless the young down the aisle!..

This day we, like holiday, waited,  
Remember when Grisha started to walk,  
Whole night we talked, how we shall marry him,  
For wedding to save little by little...

695. Here what waited for, thank God!  
Hark the little bells talking!  
Procession has returned  
Come out quickly to meet

The train came back,  
700. Pea-hen bride, falcon bridegroom,  
Scatter on them grain  
With hope bestrew the young.

## Dactylic Trimeter

### XXIV

Стадо у лесу у тёмного бродит,	4K
Лыки в лесу пастушонке дерёт,	4I
705. Из лесу серый волчище выходит.	4K
Чью он овцу унесёт?	3I
Чёрная туча, густая-густая,	4M
Прямо над нашей деревней висит,	4n
Приснет из тучи стрела громовая,	4M
710. В чей она дом сноровит?	3n (-u-uuu-)
Вести недобрые ходят в народе,	4O
Парням недолго гулять на свободе,	4O (u-u-uu-uu-u)
Скоро — рекрутский набор!	3p
Наш-то молодчик в семье одиночка,	4Q
715. Всех у нас деток — Гришуха да дочка.	4Q
Да голова у нас вор —	3p
Скажет: мирской приговор!	3p
Сгибнет ни за что ни про что детина.	4R
Встань, заступись за родимого сына!	4R
720. Нет! не заступишься ты!..	3s
Белые руки твои опустылись,	4T
Ясные очи навеки закрылись...	4T
Горькие мы сироты!..	3s

## XXIV

Herd near dark forest roams,  
Bast trees in forest shepherd pulls,  
705. From forest grey wolf goes.  
Whose sheep will it take?

Black cloud, thick-thick,  
Directly over village hangs,  
Will shoot from clouds thunder bolt,  
710. At whose house will it aim?

News goes to people,  
Young men not long walk in freedom,  
Coming soon — recruitment!

Our youngster in family alone,  
715. All of us children — Grisha and daughter.  
But head is thief —  
He will say communal judgement!

He will die for nothing fellow.  
Stand up, stand up for your own son!

720. No! you will not intercede!..  
White hands have let themselves fall,  
Clear eyes forever have closed...  
Bitter orphans we!..

## Dactyllic Trimeter

### XXV

Я ль не моли́ла ца́рицу небéсную?	4U
725. Я ли лени́ва была́?	3v
Но́чью одна́ по ико́ну чуде́сную	4U
Я не сробéла — пошла́.	3v
Вéтер шуми́т, намета́ет сугро́бы.	4W
Ме́сяца нет — хоть бы луч!	3X
730. На нёбо гля́нешь — какие́-то гробы́,	4w
Цéпи да ги́ри выхо́дят из туч...	4X
Я ли о нём не старáлась?	3Y
Я ли жалéла чегó?	3z
Я е́му мо́лвить боя́лась,	3Y
735. Как я люби́ла его́!	3z
Звёздочки бу́дут у но́чи,	3A
Бу́дет ли нам-то светлéй?..	3b
За́яц спры́гнул из-по́д но́чи,	3A (-u-uu-- u)
За́инька, стой! не посме́й	3b
740. Перебежа́ть мне доро́гу!	3C
В лес ука́тил, сла́ва бо́гу...	3C (-uu- -u-u)
К полночи ста́ло страшнéй,—	3b
Слы́шу, нечи́стая си́ла	3E
Залотошила, завы́ла,	3E
745. Заголоси́ла в лесу́.	3f
Что мне до си́лы нечи́стой?	3G
Чур меня́! Де́ве пречи́стой	3G (-u- -uu-u)
Я приношенье несú!	3f
Слы́шу я ко́нское ржа́нье,	3H
750. Слы́шу волко́в завыва́нье,	3H
Слы́шу погóню за мной,—	3i

XXV

Have I not prayed to Queen of heaven?

725. Was I lazy?

At night alone with icon wonderful

I did not fear, I went.

The wind howls, snow piles up.

No moon, not even ray!

730. At sky look — like coffins,

Chains and weights come out of clouds...

I didn't try?

Did I spare anything?

I was afraid to tell him,

735. How I loved him!

The stars are at night,

Will it be any brighter for us?..

The hare leaped from under hillock,

Little hare, stop! don't you dare

740. Cross my path!

Into woods it went, thank God...

By midnight it was scarier,—

I hear evil spirits

Began to rustle, to cry,

745. to howl in woods.

What do I care about power of evil?

Let me be. To Virgin

I'm bringing offering!

I hear horse neigh,

750. I hear wolves howling,

I hear chase after me,—

## Dactylic Trimeter

Зверь на меня не кидáйся!	3J
Лих человек не касáйся,	3J
Дóрог наш грош трудовóй!	3i
<hr/>	
755. Лéто он жил работаючи,	3K
Зíму не víдел детéй,	3I
Нóчи о нём помышляючи,	3K (-uu-uuu-u)
Я не смыкáла очéй.	3I
Ёдет он, зя́бнет... а я-то, печáльная,	4M (-uu-uu-uu-uu)
760. Из волокнístого льну,	3n
Слóвно дорóга егó чужедальная,	4M (-uu-uu-uu-uu)
Дóлгую — нítку тяну.	3n
Веретенó моё пры́гает, вёртится,	4O (-uu-uu-uu-uu)
В пол ударя́ется.	2p (-uu-uu)
765. Проклушка пеш идёт, в ры́твине крестится,	4O (-uu-uu- -uu-uu)
К вóзу на гóрочке сам припрягáется.	4P (-uu-uu-uu-uu)
Лéто за лéтом, зимá за зимóй,	4q
Этак-то мы раздобы́лись казнóй!	4q
Мíлостив будí к крестья́нину бédному,	4R (-uuu-u-uu-uu)
770. Гóсподи! всё отдаём,	3s
Что по копéйке, по грóшику мéдному	4R (-uuu-u-uu-uu)
Мы склотíли трудóm!..	3s

Beast, don't attack me!  
Wicked man don't touch,  
Dear our hard-earned money!

---

755. Summer he lived laboriously,  
In winter didn't see children,  
By night about him thinking,  
I didn't close my eyes.

He rides, gets cold... and I, sad,  
760. Of fibrous flax,  
As road is distant,  
I draw out long thread.

The spindle springs, turns,  
It hits floor.

765. Proslushka goes on foot, in ravine crosses himself,  
To load on hill harnesses himself.

Summer after summer, winter after winter,  
That's how we provided means!

Be merciful to poor peasant,  
770. Lord! We will give all back,  
Kopeck by kopeck, copper grosh by grosh  
We laid up by labour!..



## Dactyllic Trimeter

### XXVI

Вся ты, тропина лесная!	3T
Кончился лес.	2u (-uu-)
775. К утру звезда золотая	3T
С божьих небес	2u (-uu-)
Вдруг сорвалась — и упала,	3V
Дунул господь на неё,	3w
Дрогнуло сердце моё:	3w
780. Думала я, вспоминала —	3V
Что было в мыслях тогда,	3x (u-u-uu-)
Как покати́лась звезда́?	3x
Вспомнила! ноженьки стали,	3Y
Си́люсь иди́ти, а нейдú!	3z
785. Думала я, что едва́ ли	3Y
Прокла в живых я найдú...	3z
Нет! не попустит цари́ца небесная!	4A (-uu-uu-uu-uu-uu)
Даст исцеленье ико́на чудесная!	4A (-uu-uu-uu-uu)
Я осеня́лась кресто́м	3b
790. И побежа́ла бего́м...	3b
Си́ла-то в нём богаты́рская,	3C (-uu-uu-uu)
Ми́лостив бог, не умрет...	3d
Вот и стена́ монасты́рская!	3C (-uu-uu-uu)
Тень уж моя́ голово́й достаёт	4d (-uu-uu-uu-)
795. До монасты́рских воро́т.	3d
Я поклонилась земны́м покло́ном,	4E(-uu-uuu-u-u)
Ста́ла на но́женьки, глядь —	3f
Во́рон сиди́т на кресте́ золоче́ном,	4E
Дрогнуло се́рдце о́пять!	3f

XXVI

All you, forest path!  
The forest ended.  
775. Towards morning golden star  
From God's heaven

Suddenly broke down — and fell,  
God blew on it,  
My heart trembled:  
780. I thought, remembered —

What was in mind then,  
How did the star start to fall?

I remember! legs stopped,  
I try to walk, but I couldn't!  
785. I was thinking that hardly  
I'd find Prokel alive...

No, Queen of heaven will not allow!  
Miraculous icon will give healing!  
I crossed myself  
790. And began to run...

The power in him heroic,  
God merciful, he will not die...  
Here wall of monastery!  
The shadow of my head arrives  
795. at monastery gate.

I bowed to ground,  
Stood on feet and see —  
Raven sits on gilded cross,  
Heart trembled again.

## Dactyllic Trimeter

### XXVII

800. Дóлго меня продержáли — 3G  
Схíмницу сёстры в тот день погребáли. 4G

Утренняя шла, 2i (-uu-)  
Тíхо по цёркви ходíли монашины, 4J (-uu-uu-uu-uu)  
В чёрные рясы наряжены, 3J (-uu-uu-uu)  
805. Тóлько покóйница в бéлом была́: 4i

Спит — молодáя, спокóйная, 3K (-uu-uu-uu)  
Знаёт, что бúдет в раю́. 3l  
Поцеловáла и я, недостóйная, 4K (-uu-uu-uu-uu)  
Бéлую рúчку твою́! 3l

810. В лíчико дóлго глядéла я: 3M (-uu-uu-uu)  
Всех ты молóже, нарядней, милéй, 4n (-uu-uu-uu-)  
Ты меж сестёр слóвно гóрлинка бéлая 4M (-uu- -u-uu-uu)  
Промéжду сíзых, просты́х голубéй. 4n (u-u-uu-uu-)

В рúчках черне́ются чётки, 3O  
815. Пíсанный вéнчик на лбу. 3p  
Чёрный покрóв на гробу́ — 3p  
Этак-то ангéлы крóтки! 3O (-uu-u-u)

Мóлви, касáтка моя́, 3q  
Бóгу святы́ми устáми, 3R  
820. Чтоб не осталася я 3q  
Гóрькой вдовóй с сирóтами! 3R (-uu-uu-uu)

Гроб на рука́х до могíлы снеслí, 4s  
С пéньем и пла́чем её погреблí. 4s

XXVII

800. They kept me a long time —  
Nun sisters buried that day.

Matins came,  
Quietly in Church marched nuns,  
In black cassocks dressed,  
805. Only dead woman in white was:

Sleeping — young, sanguine,  
Knows, that will in Paradise.  
Even I, unworthy, kissed,  
Your white hand!

810. I stared into face for long time:  
All you younger, more colorful, neatest,  
You're among sisters like white turtledove  
Among the blue, common pigeons.

Black rosary beads in her hands,  
815. Written halo on forehead.  
Black cover on coffin —  
Thus angels meek!

Speak my swift,  
To God with holy lips,  
820. So as I not am left  
Bitter widow with orphans!

The coffin on their hands to grave was carried,  
With singing and crying she was buried.

## Dactyllic Trimeter

### XXVIII

Двинулась с миром икона святая, 4T  
825. Сёстры запели, её провожая, 4T  
Всё приложились к ней. 3u

Много владычице было почёту: 4V  
Старый и малый бросали работу, 4V  
Из деревень шли за ней. 3u

830. К ней выносили больных и убогих... 4W  
Знаю, владычица! знаю: у многих 4W

Ты осушила слезу... 3x (-u-uu-)  
Только ты милости к нам не явила! 4Y

.....

.....

Господи! сколько я дров нарубила! 4Y  
835. Не увезёшь на возу...» 3x

End of Dactyllic section

XXVIII

Moved in peace the holy icon,  
825. Sisters sang as they escorted it,  
All kissed it.

Much to Holy Virgin was honor:  
Old and young quit work,  
From villages came to her.

830. To it brought sick and poor...  
I know, Holy Virgin, I know of many

you drained tears of...  
Only to us you showed no mercy!

.....  
.....

Lord! how much wood I chopped!  
835. You will not carry in one load...»

## Amphibrachic Trimeter Resumed

(Feminine: u-uu-uu-u Masculine: -u-uu-uu- Regular except where indicated.)

### XXIX

Окóнчив привы́чное дéло,	3Z (u-uu-uu-u)
На дрóвни поклала дрoвá,	3a (u-uu-uu-)
За вóжжи взя́лась и хотéла	3Z
Пусти́ться в до́рогу вдовá.	3a

840. Да вно́вь пораздúмалась, сто́я,	3B
Топóр машинáльно взя́ла	3c
И т́ихо, прерýвисто вóя,	3B
К высóкой соснé подошлá.	3c

Едвá её нóги держáли,	3D
845. Душá истом́илась тоскóй,	3e
Настáло зат́ишье печáли —	3D
Невóльный и стрáшный покóй!	3e

Сто́ит под соснóй чуть живáя,	3F
Без дúмы, без сто́на, без слёз.	3g
850. В лесú тишинá гробовáя —	3F
День свéтел, крепчáет морóз.	3g

## XXIX

After finishing the usual business,  
On the wood-sledge put them firewood,  
For reins are starting and wanted  
Embark on a journey widow.

840. Yes again reflecting standing,  
Axe mechanically took  
And quietly, intermittently howling,  
To high pine has drawn.

Barely her legs held her,  
845. Soul is weary with longing,  
There was lull of sadness —  
Involuntary and terrible peace.

Stands under a pine tree, barely alive,  
Without thinking, without moaning, without tears.  
850. In the forest silence a coffin —  
The day bright, the frost grows stronger.



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

XXX

Не вѣтер бушует над бóром,	3N
Не с гор побежали ручьи,	3i
Мороз-воевода дозором	3N
855. Обходит владенья свои.	3i (u-uu-u-)
Глядит — хорошó ли метели	3J
Лесные тропы занесли,	3k
И нет ли где трещины, щели,	3J
И нет ли где голой земли?	3k
860. Пушисты ли сосен вершины,	3L
Красив ли узор на дубах?	3m
И крепко ли скованы льдины	3L
В великих и малых водах?	3M (u-uu-u-u)
Идет — по деревьям шагает,	3N (-uu-uu-u)
865. Трещит по замёрзлой воде,	3o
И яркое солнце играет	3N
В косматой его бороде.	3o
Дорога везде чародею,	3P
Чу! ближе подходит, седой.	3q
870. И вдруг очутился над нею,	3P
Над самой её головой!	3q
Забравшись на сосну большую,	3R (u-uuu-uu-u)
По веточкам палицей бьёт	3s
И сам про себя удалую,	3R
875. Хвастливую песню поёт:	3s

XXX

Not the wind raging over the forest,  
Not from the mountains ran streams,  
The Frost-governor patrol  
855. Goes by his possessions.

Looks — well if blizzard  
Forest trails blocked up,  
And if there were any cracks, chinks,  
And if there were any bare earth?

860. Fluffy are pine tops,  
Is pattern on oaks beautiful?  
Tight and constrained by ice floes  
In great and small waters?

Goes — on tree walks,  
865. Crackles on frozen water,  
And bright sun plays  
In his shaggy beard.

Way everywhere for sorcerer,  
Hark! Coming closer, white-haired.  
870. And suddenly he was above her,  
Over her head!

Climbing a big pine,  
On twigs with a mace beats  
And himself bold,  
875. Boastfully song sings:

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

XXXI

«Вглядісь, молодіца, смелее, Каків воевода Мороз! Навряд тебе парня сильнее И краше видать привелось?»	3T 3u 3T (u-u--uu-u) 3u
880. Метели, снега и туманы Покорны морозу всегда, Пойду на моря-окияны — Построю дворцы изо льда.	3V 3w 3V 3w (u-uu--u-)
Задумаю — реки большие 885. Надолго упрячу под гнёт, Построю мосты ледяные, Каких не построит народ.	3X (u-uuu-uu-u) 3y 3X 3y
Где быстрые, шумные воды Недавно свободно текли — 890. Сегодня прошли пешеходы, Обозы с товаром прошли.	3Z 3a 3Z 3a
Люблю я в глубоких могилах Покойников в иней рядить, И кровь вымораживать в жилах, 895. И мозг в голове леденить.	3B 3c 3B 3c

XXXI

«Look, young woman, courage,  
What is governor Frost!  
Can't you fellow stronger  
And more handsome happened to see?

880. Blizzards, snow, and mists  
Submissive to frost always,  
I go to oceans —  
I'll build palaces of ice.

Ponder — river large  
885. Hide for long time under oppression,  
Build bridges of ice,  
What people will not build.

Where fast, noisy waters  
Recently freely flowed —  
890. Today passed pedestrians,  
Carts with goods passed.

I love in deep graves  
To dress the dead in frost,  
And blood to freeze in the veins,  
895. And brain in head to freeze.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

На го́ре недóброму во́ру,	3d
На страх седоку́ и коню́,	3e
Люблю́ я в ве́чернюю по́ру	3D
Зате́ять в лесу́ трескотню́.	3e
900. Бабёнки, пеня́я на ле́ших,	3F
Домо́й удира́ют скорей́.	3g
А пья́ных, и ко́нных, и пе́ших	3F
Дура́чить ещё́ веселей́.	3g
Без ме́лу всю ви́белю ро́жу	3H
905. А нос запыла́ет огнём,	3i
И бо́роду так приморо́жу	3H
К во́жжам — хоть руби́ топором!	3i
Богáт я, казны́ не счита́ю,	3J
А всё не скуде́ет добро́;	3k
910. Я ца́рство моё́ убира́ю	3J
В алма́зы, же́мчуг, серебро́.	3k (u-u-uuu-)
Войди́ в моё́ ца́рство со мно́ю	3L
И будь ты ца́рицею в нём!	3m
Поца́рствуем сла́вно зимо́ю,	3L
915. А ле́том глубоко́ уснём.	3m (u-uuu-u-)
Войди́! приголу́блю, согре́ю,	3N
Дворе́ц отве́ду́ голу́бой...»	3o
И стал воево́да над не́ю	3N
Маха́ть ле́дяной булавой́.	3o

Woe to evil thief,  
For dread rider and horse,  
I love evening  
Start chatter in the woods.

900. Young women blaming goblins,  
Run home faster.  
And drunken, and mounted, and walking  
Fooling is more fun.

Without chalk whole face bleach,  
905. And his nose alight with fire,  
And beard I will freeze  
To reins — just chop axe!

Rich I, do not think treasury,  
And everything not diminished;  
910. I dress my kingdom  
In diamonds, pearls, silver.

Enter my kingdom with me  
And if you were queen in it!  
Let us reign gloriously in winter,  
915. And in summer we'll sleep deep.

Come in! I'm going to caress, warm you,  
I'll take the blue palace...»  
And began governor over her  
Swing ice mace.

.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### XXXII

920. «Тепло́ ли тебе́, молоди́ца?»	3P
С вы́сокой сосны́ ей кричи́т.	3q
— Тепло́!— отвеча́ет вдови́ца,	3Q
Сама́ холоди́ет, дрожи́т.	3q
Морозко спусти́лся пони́же,	3R
925. Опя́ть помаха́л булаво́й	3s
И шепче́т ей ла́скowej, ти́ше:	3R
«Тепло́ ли?..» — Тепло́, золоти́й!	3s
Тепло́ — а сама́ кочене́ет.	3T
Морозко косну́лся её:	3u
930. В лицо́ ей дыха́нием ве́ет	3T
И и́глы и́глы колю́чие се́ет	3T
С се́дой боро́ды на неё.	3u
И вот пе́ред ней опу́стился!	3V (uu-uu-u-u)
«Тепло́ ли?» — промо́лвил опя́ть,	3w
935. И в Проклу́шку вдруг обрати́лся,	3V
И стал он её целова́ть.	3w
В уста́ её, в о́чи и в плéчи	3X
Се́дой чароде́й целова́л	3y
И те же ей сла́дкие рéчи,	3X
940. Что ми́лый о сва́дьбе, шепта́л.	3y
И та́к — то ли лю́бо ей бы́ло	3Z
Внима́ть его́ сла́дким реча́м,	3a (u-u--uu-)
Что Дарьюшка о́чи закры́ла,	3Z
Топо́р урони́ла к нога́м,	3a

XXXII

920. «Are you warm, young lady?» —  
From tall pines to her he cries.  
— Warm! the widow replies,  
Herself getting cold, shivers.

Frost came down lower,  
925. He waved his mace again  
And whispering to her tenderly, hush:  
«Is it warm?.. » Warm, golden!

Heat — and she stiffens.  
Frost touched her:  
930. In her face breath blows  
And needles prickly sow  
From grey beard on her.

And now he had sunk before her!  
«Warm? » he said again,  
935. And to Prokel suddenly turned,  
And he began to kiss her.

On mouth, on eyes and on shoulders  
The white-haired wizard kissed  
And to her same sweet voice,  
940. What dear one at wedding, whispered.

And so — whether to her pleasure  
To hear his sweet words,  
That Dar'ja's eyes closed,  
She dropped axe at her feet,



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

945. Улы́бка у го́рькой вдови́цы	3В
Игра́ет на бле́дных губа́х,	3с
Пуши́сты и бе́лы ресни́цы,	3В
Моро́зные и́глы в бровя́х...	3с

945. Smile at sorrowing widow  
Plays on pale lips,  
Fluffy and white eyelashes,  
Frost needles in eyebrows...

### XXXIII

В сверкающий иней одёта,	3D
950. Стойт, холодéет она́,	3e
И снит́ся ей жа́ркое ле́то —	3D
Не вся ещё́ рожь свезена́,	3e
Но сжа́та,— полéгче им ста́ло!	3F
Вози́ли снопы́ мужики́,	3g
955. А Да́рья карто́фель копа́ла	3F
С сосéдних полóс у реки́.	3g
Свекро́вь её тут же, стару́шка,	3H
Труди́лась; на по́лном мешкé	3i
Краси́вая Ма́ша — резву́шка	3H
960. Сидéла с морко́вкой в руке́.	3i
Телéга, скрипя́, подъезжа́ет,—	3J
Савра́ска гляди́т на свои́х,	3k
И Проклу́шка крúпно шага́ет	3J
За во́зом снопо́в золоти́х.	3k
965. — Бог помо́чь! А где же Гришуха?—	3L (uu-uu-u-u)
Оте́ц мимохо́дом сказа́л.	3m
«В горо́хах»,— сказа́ла стару́ха.	3L
— Гришуха!— оте́ц закрича́л,	3m
На не́бо взгляну́л:— Чай, не ра́но?	3N
970. Испи́ть бы...— Хозя́йка встаёт	3o (u-uu-uuu-)
И Проклу́ из бе́лого жба́на	3N
Напи́ться кваску́ подаёт.	3o

XXXIII

In glittering frost dressed,  
950. she stands, getting cold,  
And dreams of hot summer —  
Not all rye got in yet,

But has been cut, easier for them has become!  
Peasants have carried sheaves,  
955. And Dar'ja was digging potatoes  
From adjacent patches near river.

Her mother-in-law there too, old woman,  
Working on full bag  
Pretty Masha — frolicsome,  
960. sat with carrot in hand.

Cart creaking approaches—  
Roan looks at his,  
And Prokelúkha big steps  
After load of golden sheaves.

965. — God help! Where is Grishúkha?—  
Father casually said.  
«In peas, » said old woman.  
— Grishúkha! the father cried,

At sky looked: — Tea, not too soon?  
970. To drink...— Mistress rises  
And to Prokel in white jug  
Gives kvas to drink.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Гришуха меж тем отозва́лся:	3P
Горо́хом опу́тан круго́м,	3q
975. Прово́рный мальчуга каза́лся	3P
Бегущим зелёным кусто́м.	3q
— Бежит!.. у!.. бежит, пострелёнок,	3R
Горит под нога́ми трава́!—	3s
Гришуха чёрен, как галчо́нок,	3R
980. Белá лишь одна́ голова́.	3s
Крича́, подбегáет вприся́дку	3T
(На шее́ горо́х хому́том).	3u
Попóтчевал баушку, ма́тку,	3T
Сестрёнку — вёртится выюно́м!	3u (u-u-uuu-)
985. От ма́тери молодцу́ ла́ска,	3V (u-uuu--u)
Оте́ц мальчуга́на щипну́л;	3w
Меж тем не дрема́л и савра́ска:	3V
Он шею́ тянул да тянул,	3w
Добра́лся,— оскáливши зу́бы,	3X
990. Горо́х аппети́тно жуёт,	3y
И в мя́гие до́брые гу́бы	3X
Гришухино́ у́хо берёт...	3y

Grisha meantime has responded:  
Peas entangled about,  
975. Prompt lad seemed  
Running green bush.

— Runs!.. ah! Runs imp,  
grass burns under feet!—  
Grishúkha black as jackdaw,  
980. only head was white.

Runs up, squat  
(On neck yoke of peas).  
Delights grandmother, mother,  
Sister, turning like eel!

985. Mother caress gives,  
The boy's father pinched him;  
Meanwhile, roan not asleep too:  
Neck pulled yes pulled,

Reached— showing teeth  
990. The peas are tasty chews,  
And in good soft lips  
Grishúkha's ear seizes...

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

### XXXIV

Машутка отцú закричала:	3Z
— Возьмí меня, тятка, с собой!	3а (u-u--uu-)
995. Спрыгнула с мешка — и упала,	3Z (u-uuu-uu-u)
Отец её поднял. «Не вой!	3а (u-uuu-u-)
Убилась — неважное дело!..	3B
Девчонок не надобно мне,	3с
Ещё вот такого пострела	3B
1000. Рожай мне, хозяйка, к весне!	3с (u-uu-uuu-)
Смотри же!..» Женá застыдилась:	3D
— Довольно с тебя одного!—	3е
(А знала под сердцем уж билось	3D
Дитя...) «Ну! Машук, ничего!»	3е
1005. И Проклушка, став на телегу,	3F
Машутку с собой посадил.	3g
Вскочил и Гришуха с разбегу,	3F
И с грохотом воз покати́л.	3g
Воробушков стая слетела	3H
110. С снопов, над телегой взвилась.	3i
И Дарьюшка долго смотрела,	3H
От солнца рукой заслонясь,	3i
Как дети с отцом приближались	3J
К дымящейся риге своей,	3k
1015. И ей из снопов улыба́лись	3J
Румяные лица детей...	3k

## XXXIV

Masha cried to her father:

— Take me, daddy, with you!

995. Jumped out of sack, and fell,  
Her father picked her up. « Don't cry

Killed yourself? — no matter!..

Girls I don't want,

Still, another such urchin

1000. Bear me, mistress, by spring!

See to it!.. » The wife was ashamed:

— You've had enough!—

(And knew beneath heart struggled  
Child'...) «Come Mashúk, nothing!»

1005. And Próklushka, standing on cart,  
seated Mashútka with him.

Grishúkha with run jumped in,

With clatter cart rolled away.

A flock of sparrows flew

110. From sheaves, over the cart, soared.

And Dar'ja stared,

Hand shading herself from sun,

As children and their father approached  
drying barn,

1015. And from sheaves on her smiled  
Rosy children's faces...



## Amphibrachic Trimeter

Чу, пёсня! знакóмые звúки!	3L
Хорóш голосóк у певцá... Послédние прízнаки мýки	3m 3L
1020. У Дáрьи исчéзли с лицá,  Душóй улетáя за пёсней, Онá отдалáсь ей вполне... Нет в мíре той пёсни прелéстней, Котóрую слы́шим во сне!	3m  3N 3o 3N 3o
1025. О чём она́ — бог её знаёт! Я слов уловíть не умёл, Но сёрдце она́ утоляет, В ней дóльного счáстья предел.	3P (u-u-uuu-u) 3q 3P 3q
В ней крóткая лáска участья, 1030. Обéты любвí без концá... Улы́бка довóльства и счáстья У Дáрьи не схóдит с лицá.	3R 3s 3R 3s

Literal

Hear song! familiar sounds!  
Good voice has singer...  
The last vestiges of pain  
1020. have disappeared from Dar'ja's face,

The soul departing with the song,  
She gave herself to it completely...  
There is no prettier in world than song,  
Than we hear in our dreams!

1025. God knows what it's talking about.  
I words to catch could not,  
But it satisfies heart,  
In earthly bound of happiness.

In it the gentle caress of fate,  
1030. Vows of love without end...  
Smile of contentment and happiness  
disappears not from Dar'ja's face.

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

XXXV

Како́й бы це́ной ни доста́лось	3T
Забвѣ́нье крестья́нке мо́ей,	3u
1035. Что ну́жды Она́ улыба́лась.	3T
Жале́ть мы не бу́дем о ней.	3u

Нет глѹ́бже, нет сла́ще покóя,	3V
Како́й посыла́ет нам лес,	3w
Недвѣ́жно, бестре́петно сто́я	3V
1040. Под хо́лодом зи́мних небѣ́с.	3w

Нигде́ так глѹ́бокó и во́льно	3X (u-uuu-u-u)
Не ды́шит уста́лая грудь,	3y
И э́жели жить нам дово́льно,	3Z
Нам сла́ще нигде́ не усну́ть!	3y

XXXV

Whatever the price  
My peasant woman's oblivion,  
1035. What more is needed? She was smiling.  
We will not pity her

No deeper, no sweeter peace,  
Such as this forest sends us,  
Standing motionless, fearless  
1040. Under cold winter skies.

Nowhere so deeply and freely  
breathes weary chest,  
And if to live has been enough,  
Nowhere sweeter than to sleep!

## Amphibrachic Trimeter

1045. Ни зв́ука! Душ́а умира́ет	3A
Для скóрби, для стра́сти. Стои́шь	3b
И чу́ствуешь, как покоря́ет	3A
Её́ э́та ме́ртвая тишь.	3b (uu-u-uu-)
Ни зв́ука! И ви́дишь ты си́ний	3C
1050. Свод не́ба, да со́лнце, да лес,	3d
В сере́бряно-ма́товый и́ней	3C
Наря́женный, по́лный чуде́с,	3d
Влеку́щий неведе́мой та́йной,	3E
Глубоко́ бесстра́стный... Но вот	3f (uu-u-uu-)
1055. Послы́шался шо́рох случа́йный —	3E
Верши́нами бе́лка идёт.	3f
Ком сне́гу она́ урони́ла	3G
На Да́рью, пры́гнув по сосне́,	3h (u-u-uuu-)
А Да́рья стоя́ла и сты́ла	3G
1060. В своём заколдо́ванном сне...	3h

1045. Not a sound! Soul dies  
To sorrow, to passion. You stand  
And feel how conquering  
This dead silence.

Not a sound! And you see blue  
1050. Vault of sky, yes sun, yes wood,  
In silver-matt frost  
Dressed up, full of miracles,

The unknown mystery,  
Profoundly dispassionate... But here  
1055. There was a rustle. —  
In tops squirrel goes.

Lump of snow it dropped  
On Dar'ja, jumping on pine,  
And Dar'ja stood and froze  
1060. In her enchanted dream...

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