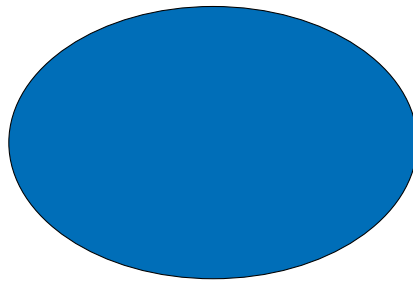


FOUR CENTURIES

Russian Poetry in Translation



№ 24, 2020



Four Centuries. Russian Poetry in Translation

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In spite of our best efforts we have failed to reach the copyright owner of Anna Alchuk's poetry to obtain the permission to publish the translations of her poems in this issue. We apologize for this and are ready to delete the texts at the request of the copyright holder any time.

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www.perelmuterverlag.de, ilyaperelmutter@aol.de

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The Four Centuries Library

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for reading our magazine. Concurrent with the *Four Centuries* journal, Perelmuter Verlag is also creating a library of Russian poetry in translation – the *Four Centuries Library*. The ambitious goal of this project is to collect books, periodicals and other papers with Russian poetry, old and new, translated into different languages, and finally to donate the collection as a whole to a university or public library. You can join me in my efforts to implement this idea by sending your donations in the following categories:

- Monographic poetry collections by separate poets translated into different languages;
- Anthologies of Russian poetry translations;
- Periodicals with translations of Russian poetry.

Please, send your donations to:

Dr. Ilya Perelmuter
Erikapfad 7
45133 Essen, Germany

The list of all the gifts with the names of the contributors will be published in *Four Centuries*. Thanks a lot for your support in advance!

Yours,
Publisher

Velimir Khlebnikov (1885–1922)
Велимир Хлебников (1885–1922)

Translated into English by James L. Richie
© James L. Richie, translation, 2020

Wanderer, did you see ...

Wanderer, did you see,
How the horse,
Sometimes tortured, wildly reins,
In the quiet surface of the light blue waters
Cast a foam?
Does the foam cry? They do not have tears.
Wanderer, see the cloud
Over there, blackening, with torn edges,
One on the blue sky.
Know – this is rotten earth
Into the azure waters of the sky
To the moment of suffering – the moment of falling under the yoke of fate,
The foam is fallen,
In the moment, cursed by the meek
Arrogantly ready to break free
Thus, spoke the gray-haired Arab
On the stone which is the same age as the Earth – sitting
And disturbing the multi-string running river.

Хлебников, В., *Странник, ты видел ...* from: Велимир Хлебников, *Собрание сочинений в шести томах*. Дуганова, Р.В., editor. Moscow, Российская Академия Наук, 2000, p.13.

[James L. Richie](#) was born in Stillwater, Minnesota. He has published translations of Italian and Spanish poetry in *Ezra. An Online Journal of Translation*.

Yury Levitansky (1922–1996)

Юрий Левитанский (1922–1996)

Translated into English by Olga Dumer

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Cinema

Early morning in the city. Semi-darkness; semi-light.
First, the sunrays touch the rooftops, then the walls come into sight.
From a little square window, suddenly the light breaks in
With the sounds of piano music. Now a movie will begin.

And the world will come to motion; it will spin, and twirl, and roll
Oh, projectionist, what power you have gained over my soul!
Magic light that cuts through darkness in a crisp and piercing beam
For the next two precious hours makes me laugh, or cry, or dream.
I am taken by the story, with its twists, romances, fights ...

Oh, my life, a spinning reel, moving pictures black and white!
Who is the genius director that could all these pieces weave
Through his script into the marvel of fantastic make-believe?
His free spirit is not bound; in his brilliant foresight
He united joy and sorrow, devastation and delight!
He will not forgive an actress if her part is lamely played –
Be it comedy or tragedy, a monarch or a maid.
Oh, how hard, yet how exciting acting is among the cast
In the fascinating narrative, unfolding very fast –
From beginning to its ending -just two hours a night!

Oh, my life, a spinning reel, moving pictures black and white!
For a while, I fail to notice that your spell is giving ground
To the glamour of the color, to the power of the sound.
Still, your muteness is so noisy that the silence can be heard
Through your captivating gestures, telling more than any word.
Your mute actors are still rushing with their faces deadly pale
Down their cheeks black tears are rolling on their fancy tux and tails.

In the armory

No white birches or wild ashes –
Used to warm the smoky huts.
Here are jewels – lustrous, precious
Pearls and rubies in fine cuts.

Viewing the Armory's possessions
All of a sudden, from afar
My eyes caught my own reflection
In the mirror of the czar.

I stood there in awed silence,
Thinking of the ages passed –
Mirrored clearly, unbiased
In czar Peter's looking glass –

It had seen the swords and spears,
Silver, lavishly ornate,
Now it sees my mundane gear
And my contemplative stat ...

Walking back that quiet evening
Stone steps echoing below,
I looked up: the sky was gleaming
Just like centuries ago.

And my mind was calm and clear
Under its eternal arch;
Focused not on Peter's mirror –
But on history at large.

On its rough uneven routes,
On its trials that will judge
With no pity and no doubt
Who to scaffold or to scourge.

Our memory should serve us –
Eras, epochs may elapse –
Nothing will escape the surface
Of the guileless looking glass!

Expecting concerns unfamiliar ...

Expecting concerns unfamiliar,
But ready to take them in,
I came back as a new civilian
In my combat boots from Berlin.

I looked about me:
The snow-covered banks.
White clouds in spacious skies.
And women folding to their breasts
Bars of milk frozen in ice.

They tottered along
All afraid of sliding,
Their headscarves low.
I heard the sound of sledges grinding
On icy snow.

Everywhere was light – clear
and glaring –
And the snow – oh, so white!
There I found my post-war bearings
My forgotten life.

The dust has been washed,
The dirt has been scraped
And the war is over.
For a rainy day, I have nothing saved
All that's mine is on me.

I'm testing myself in my new domain,
I'm now in control
Of chopping wood and taking pails
To the ice hole.

The pot with potatoes is blowing steam
My dinner is all set.
And ration cards have been redeemed
With sodden bread.

And my field overcoat is mended,
Not a single speck.
The children look at my shiny medals
With respect.

My loud clanging
With fire irons
As I'm raking ashes
Echoes for them
Like the bugles' blare
And the heavy artillery crashes.

But for me the dim light of dawning
And the drifting snow at the door
Feel like complete withdrawing
From the years of war.

The wag-on-the-wall is counting
Sinking in its drowsy lull;
My boots from that foreign country
Are standing against the wall.

[Yury Levitansky](#) was a well-known Russian poet and translator. Since 1948 more than thirty collections of his poetry have been published in Russia. Many of his poems were set to music and performed by popular bards. He was also famous in the genre of lyrical parody.

[Olga Dumer](#) was born and educated in Moscow, Russia. Her Ph.D. work in Linguistics with the Russian Academy of Sciences addressed the problems of poetry translation. She taught English as a Second Language in Russia and Germany. She also worked as a translator and interpreter in both countries. She has worked as Associate Professor of English, ESL and Linguistics at Moreno Valley College, California. Translating Russian poetry into English has been her lifelong passion.

Eduard Limonov (1943–2020)
Эдуард Лимонов (1943–2020)

Na polski przełożył Jerzy Czech
Translated into Polish by Jerzy Czech
© Jekaterina Wolkowa, original texts
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* * *

Oj, ty ziemio, co jesteś jak zdrowie,
Swojskie "kurde"człek ci tylko powie.
Innych wszak byś znalazła do woli.
Tacy złoci są, tacy goli.

Czyżbyś mnie zapragnęła – kaleki,
Który z mrocznej narodził się rzeki,
Z nocnych brzegów i z jakichś paskudnych
Miast ludnych?

Moim jest tylko ten mur, gdzie co dzień
Portki jakiś rozpina przechodzień
I uryną zajeżdża tam srodze.
Jakże ja ci, miastowy, dogodzę?

Pięknolichych weź z wioski po prostu,
Którym stale przybywa zarostu.
Na cóż ci taka błada pokraka,
Weźże sobie zdrowego łajdaka.

Na to ziemia ojczysta mi rzecze:
– Swoje "kurde"weź sobie człowiecze ...
Tyś mi właśnie, tyś jeden jedyny
Jest potrzebny na owe równiny.
Dla tej bidy zostałeś stworzony,
Na te miedze i na te wygony;
I wśród szeptu zardzewiałych noży
Pierś cherławą kolega podłoży.

Twa usłużność nagrodę ci zyska:
Świecę zrobię z twojego nazwiska.
Ona palić się będzie i palić,
By się mógł każdy Moskal uzalić.

I zrozumieć, do ziemi się skłonić
I łzę gorzką nad tobą uronić.

* * *

Idzie ulicą pan Kropotkin
Idzie Kropotkin drobnym kroczeniem
Kropotkin strzela sobie w chmury
Z czarnodymnego pistoletu

Bardzo go kocha pewna panie
Co kilometrów stąd piętnaście
Ma męża dziecko i papugę
I mieszka tam wśród ścian surowych

Dziecko jest śmieszne i kochane
Papuga jest jej przeciwnikiem
A mąż mężczyzną roztrzepanym
Co nawet siebie sam ma w nosie

Ulicą znów Kropotkin idzie
Ale już przestał strzelać w chmury
Tylko pistolet przedmuchuje
Gorącym ze swych ust kierunkiem

A pani kocha Kropotkina
Ten jej przeciwnik zaś – papuga
Bez przerwy w swojej klatce krzyczy
Kropotkin – pif! Kropotkin – paf!

* * *

W guberni numer piętnaście
Mieszkało olbrzymie stworzenie
To znaczy mieszkało w aptece
Aptekarz zaś je podlewał

Nie było rośliną bynajmniej
Miało trzy palce i usta
Mieszkało w jasnej puszczy
Leżącej tam na podłodze

W guberni numer piętnaście
Fabryki ryczały co rano
Zacinał deszcz co jesieni
Aptekarz wstawał i ziewał
Stworzeniu wody nalewał
by gryząc wargi siorbało
w puszczy ją owo stworzenie

Tak ciągnie się rok i przemija
Następny też zaraz ... przemija
Stworzenie z czerwoną kokardką
Wciąż czeka na aptekarza

Każdego chłodnego poranka
Aptekarz się w szlafrok otula
By owo stworzenie obsłużyć
I pospać jeszcze troszeczkę

* * *

Fala z drugiego przylatuje brzegu
i z Turcji na dodatek się wywodzi
dzisiaj to fala jedynie uboczna
a jutro będzie z niej fala wyroczna
Kąpiący się z wielkiego miasta
podnoszą brody i włączają do wody
A ja to nawet włączyć w nią nie muszę
jestem jej częścią. Cicho rozmawiamy

Księżyc się zjawia, pobielały tłumy
mleczne, wieczorne i leniwe
a ja wiosłuję ostatnimi nogi
tyle że w drugą niż ci wszyscy stronę

– Dobrze jest i pouczająco choćby
i śmierci życzyć. sam jednak daj spokój ...
A kiedy dywan mojej krwawej sławy
zawiśnie nad Europą, nad Paryżem
kiedy na sznurkach będą z niego zwisać
kindżały. gąbki. trutki i rosyjskie
porozrzucane szmatki. a pan, proszę pana –
popatrzysz w dal siną ...

Bezwstydne i umalowane dziwki
trzymają w zębach starych i gnijących
i męskie sadło we włosach dokoła
z białoskrzydłymi lecą marzeniami
o tak!
tak! tak!
pomyślcie! tak samo jak!

A co się jeszcze ku nauce przyda
poetom młodym przedświtowym

którzy są nastawieni przypadkowo
i pragną wszystko mądrością naprawić?

A nic! Już nic!
A mrok! A otchłań! A stare kobyły!
Rezuny nocą i Rosjanie!

Kiedyś tam mnie przyłapią za to
Tram-tata-tam!
Kiedyś tam za to mnie na pewno
Jeszcze zabiją tram-ta-tam!

* * *

Miałem kiedyś przyjaciela
A teraz kiedy ponoć umarł
Nie mam już żadnych przyjaciół
Sam jestem na tej dzikiej ziemi

Mimo to chciałbym wprowadzić
ład jakiś do swego życia
Pantofle wziąć do czyszczenia
potem odstawić na miejsce

A jednak nie wiem dlaczego
nagle to wszystko porzucił?
Temat owiany niezwykle
obcą dla mego umysłu
zmysłową mgłą tajemnicy

Czy nie zazdrości mi czasem? ...
Ach, co też ja? Czego tu zaz ...

Jerzy Czech (1952) is a Polish poet, critic and translator. He graduated from Poznań University, where he worked later as a researcher and a librarian. He started his literary activity as an author of satirical poems in the press of *Solidarność* as well as other underground magazines. His first books were published underground under the pseudonym of Jan Poznański. He is well-known as an author of the song texts for Polish musician and song-writer Przemysław Gintrowski, as well as translator of Russian literature. More than 60 times plays of Russian writers in his translation have been staged and produced for radio and TV. A collection of his poems written in Russian was published in 2014. He is living in Poznań.

Book announcement

We are happy to announce a new and upcoming edition of Russian (free) verse in English translation, *Contemporary Russian Free Verse*. The book's editor is Yuri Orlitsky, whose own poetry may be found in this issue of our journal (page 16 and onward). The poetry of Anna Alchuk (page 20), in translations of Nina Kossman and Ian Probst, will also be included in the book.

Contemporary Russian Free Verse will *not* be an anthology of contemporary Russian free verse but rather a *testimony* of the 25 festivals of Russian free verse conceived and organized by Yuri Orlitsky. Hence, several important poets, such as Gennady Aigi and Olga Sedakova, are not represented in this collection – since they did not participate in any of those festivals. On the other hand, there are some lesser known poets who did take part in several festivals and were included. The Moscow Writers Union that financed the Russian two-volume edition of the book suggested to translate it into English to familiarize the English-speaking readers and scholars both with Russian free verse and its main practitioners.

More information about the book may be found at verbum.tilda.ws/anthology

Yuri Orlitsky (1952)
Юрий Орлицкий (1952)

Translated into English by Dmitri Manin

© Yuri Orlitsky, original texts

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FOR NO ONE

Which is which here
Who's what for
Who's why

No one here
None of anyone's business
Nothing doing
Shut the door please,
people are working

A girl munches on a cookie
Composing a haiku
NI DLYA KOGO*

*FOR NO ONE (Russian)

* * *

A fiery dragon-skin throws itself
over the bald hilltops

Nights like this one are when
in their lonely homes sick people
die

Short like the stroke of a fiery tail
is the passage from epigraph to epicrisis

Wrap your sorrow in a furoshiki,
carry it to remote mountains
for your mother left there to die

But take care not to die
on your way ...

* * *

Companions of old age
fears creep in:

of an unlocked door
and fire left burning,
of a stranger in a dark alley
and a pretty girl across the aisle.

You look away,
hasten your steps,
come back to the locked door

Glancing
superstitiously
into the mirror

ON PREPOSITIONS

Wondrous are thy deeds, O Lord

To wonder at
Or about?

I wonder at your deeds:
The many marvels you've brought
And bring every day for the beauty
Of the world...

I wonder about your deeds:
I never tire of being amazed
How strange, how perplexing
This world is, arranged by you
Wonderful are thy deeds, O Lord

To wonder about
And at

IN THE SUBWAY

look at all the lonely people

Two orange-vested women
 well past forty
Slowly glide up the escalator
 wet rags in their hands
Embracing every lampstand
 as if it were a lover

* * *

I fear fire

the step
an ancient human made towards
 a blaze –

To this day
I can't repeat it

I fear water

the desperate leap
of a deranged fish
onto the shore –
I've resolved to make it

but most of all
I fear people

especially those
who've passed through
fire and water

Yuri Orlitsky (1952), Ph.D., D. Hab. is Senior Fellow at the Osip Mandelstam research and teaching laboratory. He is the author of over 800 articles on the theory of verse and prose in contemporary Russian literature, and a number of monographs, among which are *Verse and Prose in Russian Literature* (Moscow, 2002), *The Dynamics of Verse and Prose in Russian Literature* (Moscow, 2008), and *Verse in Contemporary Russian Poetry* (Moscow, 2014). Orlitsky is the author of seven books of poetry and was widely published in anthologies and periodicals; he translated T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and other American, Italian, French, and Turkish poets into Russian. He also organized 25 festivals of Russian free verse.

Dmitri Manin is a physicist, programmer and poetry translator. His translations from English and French into Russian have appeared in several book collections. The latest is Ted Hughes' *Crow* coming out in 2020 from Jaromir Hladik Press. Dmitri's Russian-to-English translations have been published in journals and are included in an upcoming volume of Stepanova writings. In 2018 he won the Compass Award for a poem by Maria Stepanova. Konst. Vaginov's *Essays on Conjoining Words by Means of Rhythm* translated by Dmitri is slated for publication by ASP.

Anna Alchuk (1955–2008)

Анна Альчук (1955–2008)

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Translated into English by Nina Kossman.

© Nina Kossman, translation, 2020

History of a glance

For Camille Paglia

O Acteon, struck!

rarified

air in the forest

ringing arrows

Sun's sisters

“do not WATCH!”

“do not WATCH!”

too late:

split asunder already –

O horror of six

thousand

piercing years

Outside – rain

diagonally

showers drip drip dripping

ashes

glassy

stacked together

and with them

one called Leah

opened up

like a clay

molt

Last summer

a bumblebee
o aconite's helmet
pea
 cock's eyes
behind
 wings
nettle name
neither bast nor sn
out with milk, sweet
raspberry lump

* Aconite - a flower known for its toxicity.

[Anna Alchuk](#) (1955–2008) was a Russian poet and visual artist. An admirer summarized her work as ‘a free-spirited romp across complex and significant ideas about personhood, identity, representation, linguistic performance, and political action’. At the time of her death she was living in Berlin where her husband, Michail Ryklin, was employed as a visiting professor at the university. The assessment that Alchuk's death had been a suicide was generally accepted, but did not go entirely unquestioned. Anna Alchuk was the name under which she worked as an artist, and by which she is identified in many English language sources. Her original name was Anna Aleksandrovna Mikhalkchuk (Анна Александровна Михальчук).

Moscow born, [Nina Kossman](#) is a painter, bilingual writer, poet, and playwright. Her publications include two books of poems in Russian and English, two volumes of Marina Tsvetaeva's poems, *In the Inmost Hour of the Soul* and *Poem of the End*, a collection of stories about her Moscow childhood, *Gods and Mortals: Modern Poems on Classical Myths* (Oxford University Press, 2001), a new book of English poems, two books of short stories, and a novel. Her translations of Russian poetry have been anthologized in *Twentieth Century Russian Poetry* (Doubleday, 1993), *The Gospels in Our Image* (Harcourt Brace, 1995), *The World Treasury of Poetry* (Norton, 1998), and *Divine Inspiration* (Oxford University Press, 1998). Her Russian short stories and poems have been published in Russian literary magazines in and outside of Russia. Her English poems and short stories have been published in a wide spectrum of American and Canadian literary magazines, e.g. Tin House, The Columbia Journal, The Threepenny Review, Michigan Quarterly Review, Columbia, Confrontation, etc., and have been translated into several languages, including Japanese, Dutch, and Greek. Two of her plays have been produced off-off Broadway. One of her plays was included in Best Women Playwrights 2000. She received a UNESCO/PEN Short Story Award, an NEA fellowship, and grants from Foundation for Hellenic Culture, the Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, and Fundacion Valparaíso. She lives in New York.

Anna Alchuk (1955–2008)
Анна Альчук (1955–2008)

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Translated into English by Ian Probstein.

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* * *

Higher! Higher! Catch — the she-flyer!
Marina Tsvetaeva

leaving the orbi
 Tu-104 I'll run
not in nirvana
not into zero yet

induced by lazar j
aw is
 it?
 ope
 ning the Way

* * *

for ache-jority of writers
is it easy for you
Re-Turn your lung out
throw up in letters
your brain!
to nail in

 of the HUMANKIND forever
I won't!

Ian Probstein is full professor of English at Touro College. He has published 12 books of poetry, translated more than a dozen poetry volumes, and has compiled and edited more than 30 books and anthologies of poetry in translation. His translations of Osip Mandelstam into English were chosen as a runner-up to the *Gabo Prize for Literature in Translation & Multi-Lingual Texts* (2016), while his translations of Ezra Pound's *Cantos* were shortlisted for the *Russian Guild of Translation Master Award*. His most recent book is *Sign Under Test. Selected Poems and essays of Charles Bernstein* (Moscow: Russky Gulliver, 2020). He also published an annotated edition of T. S. Eliot's *Poetry and Plays* (SPb.: Azbuka, 2019).

Andrei Bronnikov (1963)

Андрей Бронников (1963)

Vertaald door Paul Bezembinder, Arthur Ornée en Guus de Vries

Translated into Dutch by Paul Bezembinder, Arthur Ornée and Guus de Vries

© Andrei Bronnikov, six elegies, from: *Zen Elegies*, Reflections, 2009

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* * *

Een grijze hemel. Eentonig slaan de golven tegen de rotsen. Een eenzame vogel
hoog in de lucht. Wat heb je nog meer nodig om hier gelukkig te zijn?
Tussen twee talen in, als Tiresias, zonder woorden en bijna zonder gevoel.
Je meet je eenzaamheid af aan de verschraling van je hart.
Weet je, je bent niet de eerste en niet de laatste die dit voelt.
Maar toch denk je dat jij het bent die ons hierover moet vertellen.
Zeg het maar, als je kunt, als je tenminste niet gek wordt van het geraas van deze wind.
Zeg het maar, als het uitzinnig gekrijs van die meeuw ons al niet meer vertelt.
Zeg het maar, als je hart of iets anders vanbinnen je tenminste niet voor de gek houdt.
Want hoelang je nog hebt, weten noch die sirenen, die daar beneden op de stenen
liggen, noch de god van de oude boeken, noch deze hemel, noch dit gras.
Niemand weet het, want de natuur is niet geneigd te denken of te weten.
Die is er gewoon, als een landschap op een schildersezel,
terwijl iemand naar het tafereel kijkt, naar jou en mij, naar al dit gehaast –
kijkt met de onbevangen blik van een kind aan zee,
de zee die al onze zandkastelen wegspoelt,
voor eeuwig en altijd.

* * *

Er is te weinig licht in deze huizen en alles wat er stond, is allang weggehaald.
Er is alleen nog een stoel, een bank en dan dit overgordijn waarop het zonlicht
speelt, en verder, achter het open raam, de wonderlijke stad.
De straten zijn vol met mensen die ergens heengaan, alleen of met zijn twee.
Soms met zijn drieën of zelfs met een hele groep.
Ze hebben allemaal een bepaald doel, zijn op weg naar een punt op de horizon.
Wie heeft die aanzet gegeven, of bewegen ze chaotisch, zonder doel of zin?
Maken ze een afspraak, dan weten ze niet wat dat is, zijn ze niet in staat om de
werkelijke betekenis te begrijpen.
Het staat op papier: doe het zus of doe het zo; een technische beschrijving van
het leven.
De ongeschreven regels zijn te zien in hun autoruiten. Iedereen weet waar ze heengaan.
Maar ook in deze stad is er een vrouw die niet achter iedereen aan wil rennen.

Ze zit bij het raam en kijkt naar de hemel, naar het wit in het blauw.
Ze wacht op een telefoontje en als er aangebeld wordt, doet ze beslist niet open.
Ze geniet van haar voor gevoel, haar hand ligt op haar buik, daar waar de huid zo glad is.

* * *

We worden beheerst door het idee van het beeld. We zien alleen maar,
zelfs als we spreken en luisteren.
Die doorzichtige tentakels omstrengelen onze wereld en verhinderen ons
tot haar wezen door te dringen.
Ik zou aan iets willen denken, maar dan zie ik het al voor me,
wat natuurlijk verwarrend is.
Wat zouden we moeten als we niet konden zien, horen of voelen?
We zouden als tempels zijn met afbeeldingen van goden
die zichzelf niet kunnen zien,
aangezien goden natuurlijk blind zijn, anders zouden ze voortdurend
moeite hebben met de verandering van schaal.
Niemand kan zich immers op het oneindig kleine richten zonder het grote
uit het oog te verliezen.

* * *

We banen ons een weg naar het licht. Moeizaam
gaan we voort, nemen we stukjes ruimte in bezit,
onzichtbare kubusjes in de geometrie van de wereld.
We vermeerderen ons en vullen wat leeg zal blijven,
hoever we ook doorgroeien, hoever onze uitlopers ook reiken.
Er blijft ruimte vrij voor nieuwe loten. De dag wacht op ons,
we gaan snel weer uit elkaar, een volgende grens over,
en kennen geen grenzen.

* * *

M.

In de nazomer, aan de rand van de wereld,
gaan we door de stad vol mensen, cafés,
winkels met oude boeken, Chinezen, matrozen,
bloemen, meisjes op de fiets, grachten enz.,
komen we bij het water, nemen de pont,
en als de oever wegdrijft en de meeuwen
over het water zweven en de grijze
golven, de zwanen bij de oude pier en
de kranen in de verte ons vergezellen,
staan wij, armen om elkaar, aan de ijzeren reling

en licht de dag ons toe, weer een moment
vol leven, kijk toch hoe veel dit alles is,
hoe, hoog aan de hemel, onzichtbaar bijna,
een vliegtuigje zich ergens heen haast.

* * *

Demonen uit je jeugd blijven je kwellen
zolang je als een Egyptische priester
rondwaart in het dodenrijk, tussen
levenden en schimmen, niet bij machte
het onderscheid te maken, niet bij machte
ook maar even je ogen te sluiten,
deze cirkel te doorbreken
en deze wereld achter je te laten.
Opnieuw is Osiris hier oppermachtig,
en de stad wordt het Nieuwe Rijk,
en opnieuw zijn wij op het feest van de doden,
en de rivier treedt buiten zijn oevers, overspoelt
ons allen, dringt al onze poriën binnen
en voert ons mee.

Andrei Bronnikov (Novosibirsk, 1963) is a contemporary Russian poet, translator and essayist. He is known for his poetry collections *Zen Elegies* (2009) and *Species Evanescens* (2009) and is the author of academic papers on Platonism, philosophy of language and mathematics. In 2017, Bronnikov's Russian translation of Ezra Pound's *Cantos* appeared with Nauka Publishers, St. Petersburg (2017), and in 2020, his latest book, *The Third Being* (*Третье бытие*), appeared as a part of a philosophical book series. Bronnikov lives and works in The Netherlands. © A. Bronnikov, *Zen Elegies* (2009).

Paul Bezembinder, **Arthur Ornée** and **Guus de Vries** met at ITV, the Dutch higher education institute for translator and interpreter studies (Utrecht, The Netherlands) in 2013, where they teamed up. These translations from Bronnikov's *Zen Elegies* are a joint project. © translations (2020).

References

If you want to delve deeper into the work of a poet or translator featured in this issue, some of the previous issues of *Four Centuries, Russian Poetry in Translation* may certainly be worth looking into! Here are the references you will need.

Poets

Velimir Khlebnikov

- № 14, 2016: translated into English by Ian Probst
- № 20, 2019: translated into English by James L. Richie

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Paul Bezembinder

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- № 14, 2016: Khlebnikov
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James L. Richie

- № 20, 2020: Velimir Khlebnikov

Poem titles / first lines in Russian

Anna Alchuk

- История взгляда
- За окном – дождь
- Последнее лето
- Покидая орби \ Ту-104 рвану ...

Velimir Khlebnikov

- Странник, ты видел ...

Yury Levitansky

- Кинематограф
- В Оружейной Палате
- Белый снег

Yuri Orlitsky

- For no one (Original title is in English)
- Про ударение
- В метро