

MIKHAIL YERYOMIN

Translated from Russian by J. Kates

A sorrowful season of polytheism,
The breakage of umbelliferates over fallen grass,
A pagan lament of blackwhite marshland,
From transparent trees the creation of a tower,
Plainchant through the windows of a morning church,
A glass of golden tea from abroad,
A candle, revealed by a heavenly light,
And a maiden on the threshold of a shoulder.

1961

k = o

And the obliquity of the large standing
Searchlights knocks night off its feet.
Similar to how on a bookcase drained of books
B-Planck swoops over T Newton,
Over the clock as significant as a fire-brigade,
Over the viviparous poplars,
Over the albuminous shroud of Russia,
A library and a football field.

1962

Plants wish for both darkness and light.
(The Greeks guessed: $\square\square\square\square\square\mu\square\square\square\square$ is not evil-good,
but the day's round.)
Their faith includes neither sagacious stars,
Nor any fear of midnight, nor any cock-crow,
Nor gloom of the Underworld, nor groveling sun-worship —
The Creator introduces for them morning-evening color.
The conjugation of the verb "to be" is a pattern
Of the metagenesis (and immortality) of a blade of grass.

$\square\square\square\square\square\mu\square\square\square\square$ — night-day

1977

Citizenesses flounced in redingotes and shortened
(Shoes laced high)
Tricolored skirts and Phrygian caps.
The inventor of oxygen
(A transparent gas, no smell, no taste)
Was undone by the catastrophic clockwork
of the graveside blade,
And Roman ladies laughed at braccæ.

1983

Valkyries languish over a shakhid.
The torrent of the highway turns an undershot
Paddlewheel. The hungry rivulet of a viper
Streams against the peristalsis
Of a sand-dune. A wasp with an hour-glass
Waist dives deep into its dwelling. A flock
Of sheep flows up the slope.
Lacunæ of the minaret's protector hold a prophecy.

1985

No, not to grieve for the celebrated times
Of folkloric pies stuffed with
The guts of heretics, — but, let's say, to try on disguises
(I put on, like a mask, pelvic bones,
a spinal column gracefully bent
like the proboscis of a gas-mask,
and became unrecognizable beelzebub.) and
to chat about the placebo of self-worth.

1992

Midnight constellation,
A pond — lunar lapping — without a ripple,
And — shadows, shadows, shadows . . . — acoustical solitude.
Agitating the elastic surface
(frightened elodea sullied)
pressed by lips. Is thirst
more sempiternal
and more everlasting than water?

1992

for M. Yeryomina

The current spins the fish,
The wind bears the bird,
The earth
(Not repeating the days of Creation,
Considering them as eternal, to wit
The imperfection of reproducing
Is encoded in every creaturely matrix)
Testifies to the Absolute of the seed.

1998