

Back to Futurism

Alex Cigale

As poet first, and translator only a product of my affinities, I fully intend the English versions of poems presented here to speak for themselves. I do however ask for some understanding; while not an academic exercise, an appreciation of the many difficulties inherent in communicating the spirit of experimentation c. 1913, as opposed to the letter, will put the reader in good and patient stead. My purpose in this brief survey of the Futurist strain in Russian poetry is to offer a guide to the terrain, and so this demonstration is threefold: 1. to chart and characterize the modes of expression particular to Russian Futurism; 2. trace the historical links that joined, and separated, its various groupings and generations; and, most importantly, 3. offer the English reader unfamiliar with Russian poetry's map at least a partial zeitgeist of its social and aesthetic milieu, primarily in order to indicate the continuities of the poetic tradition. As the popularly held view insists that Modernism, and post-Modernism, represents a complete break with the past, I think it best to address these aspects in reverse.

Perhaps no other announcement of the Futurist program has left a greater and more lasting impression than The Futurist Manifesto of 1913, "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste" (signed by Khlebnikov, Kamensky, Burlyuk, and Mayakovsky) which, while intentionally aggressive in its dismissal of tradition, to the point of being offensive ("throwing Pushkin et al off the ship of modernity,") like the best of manifestos, was an aesthetic move, clearly calculated in the interest of *épatage*, most striking for its lyricism and wry, sophisticated tone. Velimir Khlebnikov, in his more extended writings on the subject, explained that the object of derision was not Pushkin per se, but the need for a Pushkin for the new age,

that in his own time, Pushkin had represented a challenge to, a bone in the throats of the French-speaking, Western-educated reading public, and that in the process of becoming domesticated as a national poet, it was precisely the decadent function of his art that had been lost. The Nineteen Teens was an age of the manifesto, of youthful exuberance that announced an intention to clear the cultural thickets, even more than the cobwebs, of the past, not a renewal but a cleansing, a “Revolution of the Word.” Like every such turning, its impetus was also the generational need to supplant the socially established modes of expression and their representatives, and *épatage* is simply the weapon adopted in every generation for this purpose.

The Cubo-Futurists group identified by the name of their publication founded in 1909, *Hylea*, aimed to synthesize the fragmentation of space of the first Modernist art movement with the extending of action into the dimension of time of the second, and this orientation of literature toward art aesthetics is characteristic of all Futurism. Many of the poets either trained as or were naive painters themselves (David Burlyuk and Vladimir Mayakovsky would be expelled from the Moscow Art Academy for their political activities in 1914). Vasilisk Gnedov’s “Poem of the End,” with its blank last page intended to be acted out gesturally, extended the tradition of *The Incoherents* (1880s Paris) and prefigured Kazimir Malevich’s famous “Black Square”. Collaborations between poets and artist resulted in the production of the Futurist books that are some of Russian Futurism’s most lasting artifacts and which may (and must be!) viewed online at the digital archives of the Getty Museum.

As the name Ego-Futurist implies, the foremost concern of the group founded by Igor’ Severyanin was not a formal one but rather the emphasis on the persona of the poet. In a twist on Groucho

Marx's quip, Ego being raised to a maximum, Severyanin departed almost immediately after founding the "movement" to exalt his own name, not wishing to be a member of a group that would have other members. More generally, it is important to note the influences so universal at the time. By 1907, the wide appeal of ideas expressed in the works of Nietzsche, Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, Einstein's matter-energy equivalence and special relativity papers, and Bergson's *Creative Evolution* is evident throughout Futurism.

A word is also in order regarding some continuities with the late Russian Symbolists. The other of the two major "movements" that broke with Russian Symbolism (each now in its centennial year,) Acmeism (which emerged out of the "Guild of Poets" c. 1911-1914) expressed as its end not a complete rejection but a corrective to Symbolism's over-riding concern with the spiritual and its detachment from material conditions, but by 1910 even in late Symbolism (Balmont, Bely, Blok, Bryusov, Sologub, most of whom would shortly embrace the Bolshevik revolution) is evident a reaction to the social decline of empire and the ferment of the coming revolution. Another weakness of Russian Symbolism was that it never approached the decadence of its French predecessor and so represents a "late," exhausted style. But the debt owed by the next generation to such transitional figures as Alexander Blok and Andrey Bely is evident in a close examination of their thematics, prosody, and both their theoretical considerations and praxis of purely sonic values of verse.

The divisions among the Russian Futurians (so titled to acknowledge their denial of a debt owed to Marinetti and the Italian Futurists,) their splintering into the Cubo- and Ego-Futurists (a matter of both personal Egos and the eternal division in Russian poetry between Moscow and Petersburg) and Pasternak's and Aseev's

Tsentrifuga (intended precisely to reject the Futurists' more radical break and emphasize their link to the tradition,) under closer scrutiny reveal that individual differences are ever overlooked as a matter of convenience in order to pursue specific common goals, that poetry as a whole contains a variety of methods within the tradition. The individual talent, as T.S. Eliot so famously argued, is never outside the tradition; though not evident in translation, many of Khlebnikov's and most (aghast!) of Mayakovsky's poems rhyme! That the Futurians included poets as diverse as Vasily Kamensky and Alexei Kruchenykh, and the Ego-Futurists Severyanin and Gnedov, is an indication of how much the divisive issues are a generational matter, of the socially conditioned need to distinguish oneself, and that, as ever, poetic schools are simply convenient groupings of friends, none of these stable enough to have lasted more than 2-3 years.

The middle generation, born at the turn of the century, though emerging out of Futurism, in the late 1910s announced their own groupings and platforms as alternatives to it. The last three such modernist "schools" of significance, the Imaginists (represented here by Shershenevich,) the Constructivists (Selvinsky et al.) and the Russian Absurdists (Oberiu, the tongue-in-cheek *Ob'edinenie real'novo iskusstva* or "Association for Real Art") represent the last of the Russian Silver Age socio-cultural phenomenon collectively referred to ever since as the "avant-garde." The Imaginists (Shershenevich, born in 1893, the same year as Mayakovsky, old enough to have competed for a position of leadership among the original Futurists in 1913, Mariengof, and for a brief time their friend, the lyrical poet Sergey Esenin,) though in part influenced by Pound's Imagism, declared themselves in opposition to Russian Futurism and distinct from their western counterpart. One need only recall the same jostling abroad, Pound having abandoned Imagism to the proselytizing of *Amyism* (Amy Lowell) and founded his other

brand of Futurism, Vorticism (“we are not Futurists – we are Imagists.”) Imaginism, in rejecting any text with a fixed meaning as poetry and declaring metaphor as the end-all and be-all, proved to be in many ways a reversion to Symbolism. The methods of the Constructivist poets are of particular interest to me in that they partly correspond to those of the second generation of American Modernists, the so-called Objectivist poets, and prefigure Concrete and Conceptualist, that is post-modernist poetics.

An important note in Russian poetry has been the division between the two centers (Moscow and Petersburg) and their constant renewal by an influx of new blood from the provinces (Pasternak and Tsvetaeva were Moscow royalty, but both Mandelstam and Akhmatova were parvenus). Khlebnikov was born in the deep-south Astrakhan, near the Caspian Sea. Burlyuk arrived from Kiev, Ukraine, Mayakovsky from Bagdati, Georgia, and later Kirsanov from Odessa, Ukraine. These three poets represent a kind of poetic transmission, Mayakovsky having been a young protégé of Burlyuk; and it was under his editorship of the Constructivist 1920s journal *LEF* that Kirsanov would emerge. A similar, later path of transmission in the post-war years is revealing of the importance of tradition and of the community of poets. Just as the young Joseph Brodsky found an affinity at the feet of Anna Akhmatova, poets as diverse, though more “experimental,” as Andrey Voznesensky and the Chuvash-Russian Gennady Aygi found their own footing by seeking out a relationship with Pasternak and Kruchenykh (just as Pasternak and his generation had worshipped at the feet of Alexander Blok.)

The middle generation, of Vvedensky and Kharms, who found their own “leftist” group, the Oberiu, represent similar lines of transmission. As a teenager, Vvedensky had sent his early verses to Blok; and both were influenced by Khlebnikov’s poetry. Their

turn toward *épatage* and performance, and later toward theatricality, speaks of their connections to Burlyuk and Mayakovsky on the one hand and Khlebnikov's and Kruchenykh's "supersagas" on the other. The Oberiu, though historically and esthetically linked to the Silver Age, do not properly speaking belong to this avant-garde itself because by the late 1920s, the opportunity to simply even publish their work no longer existed, and they survived as poets only in manuscripts and notebooks that emerged after "the thaw" to influence the post-war generation (the line from Khlebnikov through Kharms and Vvedensky is particularly evident in the work of Khvostenko I have published elsewhere.)

Rather than examining the minutia of divisions between schools, it is more interesting for our purpose to summarize the several modes that, in various combinations, are representative of Russian Futurism as a whole. These are: 1. the related orientations toward performance and the neologistic qualities of sound poetry as represented in so-called *Zaum* or "trans-rational" poetics; 2. a recovery of the folk, animistic themes already evident in Late Romanticism and, more specifically, of the proto-Slavic roots of the Russian language; 3. the decadence and individualism inherent in Romanticism itself; 4. the formal qualities of the language as material, characterized by breaking of grammatical rules: elimination of punctuation and capital letters or their expressive, visual use, metrical irregularity and variation, syntactic complexity and irregularity, the irregular, expressionistic use of conjugation, portmanteau words and partial, modified neologisms extending existing cognates (Khlebnikov, for example, invented 400 words with the root word "love," to which the Serge Segay sequence in the present selection may be considered an homage); and lastly, 5. the related thematics of the new technological age, ironic or grotesque treatment of the bourgeoisie social milieu representative of increasing urbanization and class stratification, and the

alternative Man of the future whom Khlebnikov christened the “Budetlyanen” and conceived of as an alternative “Government of Time,” neither a ruling class nor artists, but rather a creative class of inventors-explorers.

At the core of Marinetti’s own 1911 Futurist manifesto was its “anti-cultural, anti-aesthetic, anti-philosophical” dimension, his “art of the future” being a nihilistic rejection of past examples, its “universal historical purpose... to spit daily on the altar of art.” These negativist aims corresponded to the political, rightist program of worship of the machine, power, violence, and war, the creative impulse as destruction. Along with these, one might posit the more positivist, linguistic aims: “the demolition of the socially accepted syntax,” “the use of the verb in ambiguous declensions” with the aim of communicating the indivisibility of experience and the preeminence of intuition, “maximum of disorder” and “comprehension by analogy,” “the acceleration of style” through elimination of punctuation, all these intended to enable the literary text to communicate the material conditions of life, including the life of inanimate objects themselves; all these are still very much relevant to poetic practice today. The almost pagan, ecstatic depiction of such objects as trains by nearly all the Russian Futurists was transformed in the “SotsArt” of the Russian Conceptualists of the 70s and 80s, its “documentary” focus on the collective minutia of the dominant imagery and vocabulary of Socialist Realism (propaganda posters, postcards, slogans, passports and other documents) now viewed through the lens of irony, the locus updated from the decadent setting of the 1910s cabaret and subverted in the private prism of the Russian communal Kitchen that had become the new meeting place for the “decadent” bohemia of the 60s.

As the Russian Minimalist poet Ivan Akhmeteyev put it: Khlebnikov – our grandfather, Kharms our father. The connections

linking the poets of the post-war generation to their Futurist predecessors are far more extensive than this brief survey may suggest; these are but the most obvious examples. Serge Segay and his wife, the poet Rea Nikonova (Anna Tarshis) were officially recognized for preserving the tradition of the Futurists with the Andrey Bely special prize (1997). Alexei Khvostenko, late in his life, adapted and set Khlebnikov's poems to music, available in his album with the Russian progressive rock group *Auktyon, Zhilets Vershin (Inhabitant of Mountaintops)*. While the members of the so-called Li-anozovo group (Jan Satunovsky, Genrikh Sapgir, Igor Kholin, and their mentor, Yevgeny Kropivnitsky) repeatedly acknowledged the influences of Khlebnikov and Kharms; their compositional methods and collaborations with painters and graphic artists speak to an even deeper connection. Gennady Aygi's own unique way, his "composition by field" and folk thematics, reveal both the influence of Khlebnikov and a reaction against Mayakovsky's fractured line that had proven so formally dominant for the 60s generation of official Russian poets. In many ways, Aygi's life path is exemplary. Having been expelled from the Gorky Institute in 1957 for "composing a book of poetry subverting Socialist Realism," following Pasternak's advice, he began to compose in Russian while working for the next ten years as the secretary of the Mayakovsky Apartment-Museum. Mayakovsky's liberation of the line, his own Chuvash heritage, along with the western example of French poetry Aygi translated into Chuvash were his influences. The Moscow Conceptualist poets (Dmitri Prigov, Lev Rubenstein, Mikhail Sukhotin,) while outside our scope, may similarly be counted as heirs to Futurism on the basis of the performance-based nature of their work, and as viewed through the ironic lens of the post-Futurists. Lastly, the roots of the Russian Minimalist poets (Vsevolod Nekrasov, Ivan Akhmetyev, Alexander Makarov-Krotkov) may also be traced to Khlebnikov and Kharms.

I suspect that in 2013, the centennial of the apex of the Russian avant-garde, the founding of Russian Futurism will be commemorated and commented on often. My intuition tells me that we are now at a similar historic and aesthetic juncture and that, following our own fin de siècle ferment, another change, another syncretism and convergence is likely brewing. But that is another story, one that requires a parallel re-examination of Acmeism (which I am pursuing in my publications on the work of the minor Acmeist poets, Mikhail Zenkevich and Vladimir Narbut.) My hope is that with the presentation of this work, particularly that of the lesser known poets, a more complete picture of Russian Modernism and post-modernism becomes available to English poetry.

David Burlyuk (1882-1967)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Dead Sky

“Sky – you’re a corpse! nothing more!
And stars – worms – drunk on fog
Inured to pain (rust) – lings of deception.
Sky – you are a rotting corpse!
For (attentive) myopics,
Licking sickening grains
With the greedy (graspiness) of Africans.
Stars – worms (pus-filled alive) hives!!
I am caught in a web of cords.
A bittern’s moan.
Humans-animal!
Truth a sound!

Lock the clocks of gateways
The call of arms
A spider.

1913

Railroad Whistling

The platfoRm – a stRing of flashing lights
The autumn Rain scRapes with its bRoom
A cRowd of people as the face of a wall
On theiR knees to kiss the Roadside ALTAR.
“The light lives”!?! – appropriate these puns
Oh midnight of witticisms
Of threadbaRe bacheloRs
To discaRd the bReeze’s fables
and be – ASH.
(concentrated upon the sound of R is a sense
of the most severe strictness:)
D and T – the sense of solidity, stability.

1910

Caboose and tender

1.

The engine like a bird
Whistled and was gone
The moon = quotation +
The object sanctified
The train's exhalation
An incline and a bridge
A perspiring underarm
And a thundering tail

2.

The child was young
He cried day and night
The poet ran off
Executioner of life
My head teeming with
Other people's words
An estranged bride
The train's wheels start

1910

Train = arrow

Train = arrow
The city = a bow
(departure time = confirmed)
Every sacrifice is wretched
Streetlight = a needle
And the heart = a bunch.

Winter train ride
Path of snow = whitewashed way
The frost = bee stings =
Hissing of steam
Years of distant sparks
Fleeting
The Russian
aRk.

1910

Velimir Khlebnikov(1885-1922)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Timingly—Cat-tails

On the lake shore,

Where stones have become time

And time has become stone.

On the shore of a lake

Cat-tail time and stones,

On the lake shore

Noisily bright-lit.

1908

Grasshopper

Winging its golden scroll
Of utmost-thin veins
The grasshopper places his belly on rigs
Of the many a near-shore blade and faiths.
“Din, din, din!” – the animalcule trundles.
Oh, swan-ning!
Oh, enlight!

1908-1909

Sing to me of young girls, innocent,
Those that are arguing by the cherry trees
About their broad-shouldered young men.
They are among you – I know and believe.

1908

The wind's wrist whirls and wanders
Along the willows' golden horde.
What once was morning now is day.
Blessed be he who all morning lazed.

1908-1912

Young girls, those who are stepping
with the boots of their brown eyes
on the flowers of my heart.
Young girls, who are lowering spears
over the lakes of their eyelashes.
Young girls, washing their feet
in the lake of my words.

1921

Alexei Kruchenykh (1886-1968)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

At midnight I noticed on my bed-sheets something black and
solid
the size of a bedbug
framed in a red fringe of millipedes.
I set it on fire with a match. And he swelled up, without burning,
like a metal bottle with its bottom sticking up.
So I thought to myself – perhaps not enough of a flame.
But for such a one – a match is like a log!
My friends arriving covered him up with kindling,
papers soaked in kerosene, and set him ablaze.
When the smoke cleared – we noticed a little beast
sitting on the corner of the bed
in the pose of a Buddha (about 1/4 inch in height)
and like bi-ba-bo hand puppet smiling snidely.
Having understood, this is a SPECIAL creature,
I headed to the pharmacy for rubbing alcohol
while at the same time
my buddies were twisting cigarette butts into his guts
as into an ashtray.
Trampled it with their heels, slapped his face around, roasted
the tips of his ears
and someone scorched red-hot the headboard of the bed over a candle.
Having returned, I asked;
How goes it?
From the darkness, they answered quietly:
It's all over!

So you burned it up?
No, he blew his own brains out....
BECAUSE, he said,
IN THE FIRE I DISCOVERED SOMETHING INFINITELY BETTER.

1922

You fled the train station's background
and the signals all meekly flared out.
The train
 hooted and thrashed about,
With its throat slitting the metal air.
Chattering with chills
 the rails couldn't set
 a tooth upon tooth.
The wind swung a noose of suffocating smoke.
And I dressed for the occasion, funereally
 in suit and tie....
And suddenly – in your wake:
 Stop! Seize her!
She has left for good?
The silhouettes are tearing above the forest,
and I – into the wishing well,
 with mops and brooms,
to flail about doggie-paddle cold and alone
where the dampness and night sleep embracing.
On the Caucuses Express you sashayed doll-like
 and soon will get married,
and me – to bugs slithering under a stone,
where the bone-crunching octofang
 will chomp me
 all the way through....

1930

(ěm)

Igor' Severyanin (1887-1941)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Overture

Pineapples in champagne! Pineapples doused in champagne!
Wonderfully delicious and exciting and spicy!
All dressed up in something Norwegian!
done up in something Spanish!
I'm inspired with passion! and I reach for my pen!

The airplanes' striations! the automobiles' wild rushing!
Express trains' windwistling! The wingsails of yachts!
Someone here kissed all over! Someone there has been beaten!
Pineapples doused in champagne – the pulse of the night!

In the company of nervous maidens, among intellectual women,
I will transform life's tragedy into a fantasy-farce....
Pineapples in champagne! Pineapples doused in champagne!
From Moscow to Nagasaki! From New York fly to Mars!

January 1915

Nikolai Aseev (1889-1963)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Announcement

I would forbid the “Sale of Oats and Straw”....
Doesn't it smack of murder of the Son and Father?
And if my heart arrives deaf to the streets' worries,
cut off, thunder, chop off my foolish, unhearing ear.

Letters like fleas hoping over infest
and, sticking to, cover the pristine page.
The mind, following its ingrained habits,
gathers up and hoards dried out crumbs.

An orphanage home for the stray wind
or for the spring's inns and hostels –
this is what must be distributed freely
through all the markets of our country.

1915

Vasilisk Gnedov (1890-1978)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Summer-flighting

to I. V. Ignatiev

Saddle up summer on the dappling
Inflating a wing over greening.
Guardiing Summer-flight-house
Mountains. Knees under hands slapping.
Summer-flight-house guardy, hourling –
Roundscape – an unsleeping eye –
Gossamer veil-swaddled with gauze,
Flower-light colors Summer us....
I oversum summer-flight! Wing oversum!

1913

Dappled-field

A Sketching

A scream....
Sun-dapple
And twenty clues...
Grass poisonous –
Greenish-dapple

1913

Boris Pasternak (1890-1960)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Train Station

Train station, the indestructible fire box
Of my departures, my meetings and partings,
My tried and trusted friend and orderly,
Were I to enumerate your merits I'd fail.

At times my life was – I, wrapped in a scarf,
and just as the cars are open for boarding,
the muzzles of harpies are breathing with fire
and a thin sheet of steam that covers our eyes.

Thus it has happened, that just as I sit down,
It's touch-and-go, all over, touch and it's gone.
I say my goodbyes to happiness, it is time now!
I'll be jumping off the train here, conductor.

It so happens – the west opening up before us
In the maneuvers of rails and wild weather
Begins clicking with its beak of ticking snow
So as not to fall under the train's rail guard.

The repeated train whistle decays into silence,
And a second one sounds from a distance,
And the train flurries across the stations
Like a deaf and many-humped hurtling storm.

And now the twilight that has grown impatient,
And now in the wake of the smoke and the steam,
The fields and the wind startled chase after –
And I numbered among them join in their team.

1913

Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

As it may

The street collapsed like the nose of a syphilitic.
The river – sweet longing that spilled into spit.
Having shed their underwear down to the last leaf
the vulgar gardens have gone to seed in June.

I walked out onto the square
and put the desiccated neighborhood
on my head like an orange wig.
People terrified of me – out of my mouth
squirming with its feet an undigested scream.

But they won't judge me, won't bark at me.
As at a prophet, they will strew flowers in my wake.
All of them with collapsed noses know
I – am your poet.

As by tavern rot, I'm terrified of your terrible judgment.
The prostitutes will carry me alone in their hands
like a sacred relic through the burning buildings
and display me before God as their redemption.

And God will break down and whimper over my book!
Not words – shuddering, congealed into clumps;
he will race across the sky with my verses under his arm
and, all out of breath, recite them to his acquaintances.

1914

Something regarding the conductor

The restaurant glowing orange from electric lights.
The armchairs sprawling with the soft flesh of dames.
Then the offended conductor raced out
and ordered the musicians to wail.

And right off to the one who tastily stuck
in his beard a fat herring, the trumpet,
having found a way, into his well-fed mug
smacked a fistful with its copper tears.

He still had the time between his hiccups
to expel a scream into the golden chops
and was trampled by those smacked around
by the trombones and oboes and ridden rough.

When the last guest failed to crawl to the door
and was snuffed out with his cheek in the sauce,
having ordered the musicians to howl animal-like
the conductor completely went off his rocker!

Into the very teeth of the overstuffed carcass
squeezed a trumpet like a copper cream puff
and blowing into it listened, swollen to twice its size,
thrashing about in his guts a cry.

When toward morning starving from viciousness
the bar owner showed up to split the night's take,
the conductor, hanging from the chandelier, already
turning blue, swung and turned a little bluer.

1915

Vadim Shershenevich (1893-1942)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Photographs of the heart

Khrisanf

You don't suppose that with your Kodak-heart
you can photograph a second dancing the can-can!
Eternity herself has shaved off her beard
and is luring you on a flute that is broken.

The ribbons of lips in the beckoning distance.
We exist outside of time – let's skip town.
We hold garlands of charlatanism in our hands;
shall we toss them to one drowning in a pond?

We slash down the fences with our innovation!
How endearing it is to preach the new gospel.
Before us stands the monument to Cubism
Shuttered by the curtain of anonymity.

Please understand, I believe we are moving
along the broad avenues of electronerves.
You're kidding! I too am dressed in orange.
Yes, we are all equal and comparable.

Return to me the crumbs and bones of memory!
I want nearer to the monument! Please let me!
There, the gospel about hysterical Hamlet
(My friend) is inscribed upon the granite.

Shatter and tear the curtains, you clowns,
If you are certain beneath them is a prince!
The enraged Apises will trample your soul.
I am alone.... I am little ... I'm a pinkie.

[1913]

Toast

a l l o f u s a s t h o u g h o n r o l l e r s k a t e s
e **V** e n t h o u g h e a s y t o f a l l o **F** f b u t n o w
w h **A** t a p l e a s u r e l a d i e s t o **R** a c e w i t h
j o l l **L** y g o o d h o w t h e y w e a v e **O** u t a n d i n
l i q u **E** r **B** a r s f i t c o a t o f a r **M** s t o a t e e
& w e d a **R** i n g l y s p r a y e d w i t h p e r f u m e
e v e r **Y** s **Y** m b o l s e e k s j u l y s **A** r d o r a n d
s a l **U** t i n g s p e e d w e r a c e c r **U** d e b o a t s
p a **S** s i o n a t e k n o w i n g t h a t **T** h e y o u n g
m **O** u t h s a r e b e a r d l e s s w e w **H** o s c r e a m
V i v a t ! a n d d r a i n g l a s s e s **O** f w h i s k y
h a p p i l y r a i s e a t o a s t t o m **R** b r y u s o v

[1913]

Ilya Selvinsky (1899-1968)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

***Report**

To Chairman of the Triumvirate

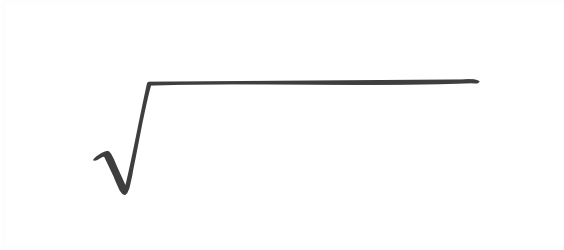
Mister Dolinin

Platoon Leader Braude's Report

On general's orders in Kronstadt'skot Ravelin
On battery tower number four (south-west)
For my command during the intervention in Karelia
Of the armored train "The Screamer"
On the night of the 3rd I was shot by firing squad
And dumped in a moat ditch.
To guard the honor of the Russian flag
I ask you to grant the following request:
For a botched job – trammel the soldiers,
As for me: finish me off.

Signature: Braude
Lucerne Village
March the 6th

Index number and resolution:
The second point – granted.



The structural objective of “Report” – to present in condensed form – the epos, if we are to understand it as a broad depiction, of the conflict of races, nations, and classes. The breadth of this representation may depend not so much on the lens’s aperture, as on the perspective – just as the horizon is as clearly visible through the ship’s portholes.

The semantic content – the conflict of class sensibilities examined in the light of morality: on the one hand, the arrogant heroism of a representative of the old land-owning class, in spite of everything seeing underneath a Red Army uniform only a Russian soldier and, in no uncertain terms, demanding his own death as a means of correcting the latter’s incompetent work – on the other hand, the deprived-of-all-sentimentality, meticulous, no-nonsense response of the Bolshevik.

1921-22

Daniil Kharms (1905-1942)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

I detest children, old men, old crones, and elderly wise people.

Poisoning children is cruel. But something has to be done about them!

I find only young and healthy plump women endearing. To the other representatives of humanity I relate with nothing but mistrust.

Old women, who carry around wise thoughts in their heads, should be caught in leg traps.

Every mug bearing an intelligent expression calls forth in me a very unpleasant sensation.

What are flowers anyway? Every woman between her legs smells significantly better. Both one and the other are natural; this is why no one would dare take issue with my words.

second half of 1930s

King of the universe,
dearest king of nature,
king who is nameless,
who hasn't even a definite frame,
come over to my house
and together we will down vodka,
stuff ourselves with some meat,
and then discuss acquaintances.
Perhaps your visit will bring me
the Lord's on high autograph,
or perhaps your photograph,
that I may your portrait depict.

27 March 1934

It is your part to god-create me (this a heavenly gift)
A heavenly gift, one ought to think, a sacred gift.
Yes, I am definitely very very very interesting
And even very very very very highly evolved.

How satisfying to write without missing a beat!
And then what I have written out loud to read.
A most pleasant way to pass the time indeed.
When at once participate both body and soul.

That's when I feel myself in the universe's stream.

1935

Yes, I'm a poet forgotten by the sky.
Forgotten by the sky from days of old.
But once upon a time Phoebus and I
made a racket joined in a sweet choir.
Yes, there was a time when I and Phoebus
joined in a sweet choir and made a squall.
And there were days when I and Geb were
tight as drops of water and in clouds above
the thunder in its youth rang with laughter.
The thunder rolled flying after Geb and I
pouring from the heavens its golden light.

<1935-1937>

The end's here, my strength expires.
The grave calls me to her rest.
And suddenly life's trace is lost.

Quieter and quieter beats the heart.
Death races toward me like a cloud
And in the sky the sun's light goes out.

I see death. It's forbidden for me to live.
Goodbye, dear earth! Earth, farewell!

1937

The Sensual Lumberjack

When in the distance flashed saws
and the axes had started ringing,
my girlfriends all became dearer.
I'm in love with them ever since.

Oh, girlfriends, my dear girlfriends,
So pleasant to sense you with my hands!
You're all so smooth! All so solid!
One more wonderful than the next!

It's so pleasant to touch your breasts,
Brush my lips the length of your legs.
Oh, help me people, my dear people.
Oh, help me God, my dear God!

24 August 1938

Perechin [Mr. Contrarian]

Perechin sat on a thumbtack, and from that moment on his life changed abruptly. From a quiet, thoughtful person, Perechin became a confirmed mischief-maker. He let his mustaches grow out and subsequently trimmed it in such a careless way that one mustache was always longer than the other. And besides, his mustaches grew in a very uneven way, so that it became impossible to look at Perechin. And to boot, he winked his eyes and twisted his cheeks in a disturbing manner. For quite some time Perechin limited himself to minor delinquencies: he spread rumors, wrote denunciations, short-changed the women train conductors, paying them for the ride with the smallest copper coins and always omitting two and sometimes even three kopeks.

August 14, 1940

How easy it is for a man to get lost in insignificant details. It is possible to pace for hours from the table to the wardrobe and from the wardrobe to the sofa without finding an exit. It is even possible to forget one's whereabouts and shoot arrows at some small case suspended from the wall. "Hey, you!" you can yell at it, "I'm gonna get you!" Or one can lie on the floor beholding closely the specks of dust. In this too consists inspiration. It is best to do this for hours, having come to terms with time. Of course, it is very difficult to determine a schedule for this, for what sort of time frame does dust have?

It is still better to gaze into a bowl of water. To gaze into water is always beneficial and instructive. Even if there is nothing to see in it, at least it always feels good. We gazed into the water, saw nothing in it, and very quickly became quite bored. But we soothed ourselves with the notion that we after all did something beneficial. We balled our fingers one at a time into our fists and counted them. But what we were counting, we had no idea, for what is there that can be counted in water?

August 17, 1940

Semeon Kirsanov (1906-1972)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

The Letter M

Maroon M –
my metro,
Moscow's metro.
May, music, many Muscovite maids,
muscular metro masons,
mingling multitudes march:
– Meager merit?
– Mates, much more!
Muffled, minus moths.
May I? Merci!
Marble, marine malachite, milky mosaics –
mirage!
Mikhail Maximovich mutters, mechanic –
Makarich, Makarich –
Meter's monometer moves.
Mute minute....
Metro's motor mightily
moans.
Motion, motion, motion;
magnesium, meteor, movement.
Mom, mom, mother!
Marvelous!
Motor murmurs – machine's mighty music.
Moss Mall!
Mitya motions to misty-eyed Marusya!
Mar' Mikhailna, metro man-created.
Mighty men, masterful!

Motion, motion, motion...
Miniscule Marik mopes to mother:
Mom, mom, may I, ma?
Not enough words starting with this letter...
(Music ... moths ... marvel ... meanwhile....)
Mechanical minutia!

Attend to the poet!

I command

words

to begin

with the letter eM:

MLY MENGINE METRO MUNDER MALLS
MOSSOVET
MAST MOZDVIZHENKA
MOWARD MOGOLEV MOULEVARD!
MLEASE!

1935

Andrey Voznesensky (1933-2010)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

Monologue of a Beatnik

Escape – into yourself, to Haiti, village churches, outhouses,
to Egypt –

Run away!

Roaring and meowing, mechanical multitudes emit smoke:
“Meat!”

The barbaric, like Khan Batu,
Machines have enslaved us.

On ships in their miserable quarters,
From shot glasses swilling benzene,
They calculate: who was it in England
That led the revolt against the machines?
Run away!

And at night, having overcome timidity,
To his creator,
The cybernetic robot:

“Give me – he says – your wife!
I have a weakness for brunettes – he says –
I love it at thirty rounds per minute.
Better surrender her of your own free will!”

Oh, this century's predatory things!
A veto is imposed on your soul.
We flee to the mountaintop, go to seed,

Dive naked in the water,
But the rivers evaporate,
In the oceans the fish go extinct...

From Women's wombs spring Rolls-Royces
Radiation!

... My soul, my feral beastie,
Along the metropolis's back alleys,
As a puppy with a rope around its neck,
You dart about, whimpering!

And time whistles prettily
Above tan-skinned Tennessee,
Mysterious, like a phoenix bird
With a Duralex chassé.

1962

Alexei Khvostenko (1940-2004)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale

***Verpa/Portraits of Friends**

to a. sorokin

the targets are: petersburg side
vasilevsky island
colonna
pharmacy island
okhta
vyborg side
golodai
new holland
france
italy
pharmacology
vologda
in one word
the russian/empire/

1.
visible in the distance the gray skeleton
of peter's island/autonomic stump of ground
so accidentally it was depicted by a japanese
landscape artist or wise man
so we ourselves sketch it covered in thickets
of the tiger or with cat-tails in its hands
so it feeds on the dampness of the royal puddle
and stuffed with significant history disappears
into europe

2.

here is a man
incapable so to say in a word of “breathing”
to lead him by the hand
from the row of other
words signifying nothing
/wearing a hat
or with isakievsky cathedral on his shoulder/
he tosses the above-mentioned history
on the card table
and while considering the impossibility of losing
already kissing eternity places a bet on zero/
/null/

3.

in the childhood home something strange
is taking place/ /!
answering to.....
and patting europe on its little head he strolled
along the winter canal to the neva river
somewhere in the folds of his clothes lost
are the netherlands
/and what exactly?/
in portugal – salazar and/or
I
/was there a century earlier/

4.

immediately after the outskirts the provinces begin
old women and men wash themselves in the puddles
loudly giggling and splashing mud
further along comes into view the diligently Guarded
master’s estate

with portraits of the former vologda
eminences of the local nobility
/hanging in cellars/
a church in which on easter
/and in all the other weathers/
the sound of hollow tin balls knocking together
is heard and further on –
at the very bottom –
just past the border:
my signature
/a.khvostenko/

5.
trunks
voyage sacks
blanket carrying bags
box crates
suitcases
all luggage is checked
/under the condition of certain return
at the journey's end/
but before my eyes a miracle occurs
some or other/single/little suitcase
journeys immediately
/among all the tourists/
alone
without its “master”

6.
or otherwise
targets – are deprivations
/constant vanishings of formerly
meaningful words/
written down before
the rules and conditions of the game had been set.

1965-67

**Verpa:*

- 1. word invented by Alexei Khvostenko ("Khvost") to describe his literary credo;*
- 2. name of the avant-garde Leningrad literary group founded by Khvost along with Henri Volobonski;*
- 3. title of posthumous anthology of the collected literary works of Alexei Khvostenko.*

Serge Segay (1947-)

Translated from Russian by Alex Cigale with Dana Golin

recipes of metamtextosis

1. japanese cemental for gluing of werworld

from a lits,
thinly diluted with cold mindough,
they make textbread,
thin it with thinkoil
and ponder for the yeastduration of two minutes,
cemental,
risk and green,
may serve for the gluing out of framedifferent things.
another no less charmgrowing cemental
for the adhesion of werworld and mystery
prepared fr om another'segg wordcream
mixmashed with crushed briskinness.
it quickly drysugars and is veryternal.

2. creatinoid eclairs

5/8ths pound of pissugar finely
sprinkled
mixed with 6 creamterlooped cursives
stirring in 3/8ths pound of finest dried longing
and a touch of mumbling sleepery
or anylime mindstraining.
slither a mental knuckle

muck it up to a sheen
wipe it down with paperalchemy
sprinkle lightly with melancholy
pour the prepared terrormass
into the handwriting tubulus
dirtydip the very tip
and use it to squirt out the textdough
in fine squigules
put it in an ashwarm flace
but not on top of languagestove
so that it is lightly crusticized
then insert into deceptible speech
and make sure that no one spoils it.
when they are ready to be sounded out.
let it get slightly stalecool.
defend with a knife.

3. honeycakes in a hurry

take 10 yolckisses and rub-grind with 1 sighful
of consumpsugar
whiplove 1 sighful lovecream, 1 lovecream blubber,
squeezezejuice from 1 lemonlove
slobber it all up well
and stickbitch hands in until
the thighdough is not too thick
also bite this well through
add 10 foamed up carresses
let the doughprivates rise
and spill into prepared sheets.
and bake in hot lovery

4. sour fluxage

water (warm)	500 c
hyperspermic dessicate	100 u
or pharphallic	150 n
menstruarchic feelup	12 t

5. dried lyubabka, shishlyoub from fellated chickery

meat (chickery) – 500 bounces
sprig of bulbous – 1 nudie, stale vinger
per 2-3 saltthighs
painhurt
penisper to taste.

slicelick chickery into tiny piecebites
soil with salt, lovepepper, comingle into anti-hymenate
cuntainer, douse with nibblings, urinate well
bed-whet for no less than 3 hours; then pull out
the sausage from marinanus, strip off remaining bitchatude
fornicate up to 5 fuck-slices per thigh
and stir-bother on sleezed-up charm-coal
give it up in bloodbed on hard stop.

6. canned tomatings

best to can mature dear tomatings
round or boobular in shape
with a dense meaty pulp
or prickly. you may

can the tomatings peeled
or with skins on.
preserves made of skinless tomatings
have the best qualovity.
take in the lovely tomatings, rinse, lay down
in consieve and drop in firingpot
with boiling llovequid for 1-2 lovemeasures.
quickly remove the consieve
and immediately place in coolinairy lube
on the milkedfruit will appear cracks
the foreskin will stretch out from the pulp
and this will fucksillitate its removal
removing the skin is possible by hand
with the help of knave, slicked in all the right places.

7. jam made of loverberry

carefully comb over the loverberry
sew as to seminally manhandle bare-breast.
ectomize the pit-joints and the unripe bare-breasts
prepare the scratch-pot
and carefully immerse in it the loverberries
lightly stir the com-pot
and let it loverrise.
remove the lidlove
and squeezelove to loveliness
per 1 lovertion of loverberries
1 lovergram of sugarlaugh,
½ glasstick bitchbrew.

(numbers 1 thru 4 written in 1973, the rest in 1974)

Appendix A: Poet Biography

Along with Boris Pasternak, **Nikolay Aseev** (1889-1962) was a key participant in the post-Futurist group Tsentrifuga. Aseev's reputation and quality, both as a poet and as a person, his significant talent notwithstanding, suffered from his live-long service to the Soviet regime. Considered a close friend by Mayakovsky and Pasternak, the latter broke-off his relationship with both of them c. 1925. Aseev's infamy rests primarily with having been the last person Tsvetaeva turned to for help, not forthcoming, days before her suicide (he had received the Stalin Prize the same year, in 1941.)

David Burlyuk (1882-1967) has been called "the father of Russian Futurism" and was its impresario, organizing the group's barn-storming and immensely popular tours throughout Russia. Burlyuk is perhaps most famous for having served as mentor to Vladimir Mayakovsky, both having been expelled from the Moscow Art School in 1914 for their political activities. His artwork brings in substantial sums at auction, and among his many accomplishments as an artist was a leading role in bringing Modernist art to Japan, where he lived from 1920-1922, before immigrating to New York. He was not allowed to return to Russia until after Stalin's death.

Vasilisk Gnedov (1890-1978,) a member of the Petersburg Ego-Futurists established by Igor Severyanin, after the dissolution of the group, he toured Russia along with the Cubo-Futurists (Khlebnikov, Mayakovsky, Kamensky) but never joined the group. His is most famous for his poem "Death to Art," the last part of which (15. "Poem of the End,") was a blank page intended to be accompanied by a gesture of the hand in performance. He ceased writing poetry in 1921. Repressed in 1936, Gnedov survived twenty years in the Gulag. He resumed writing, this time very short lyrics, in the late 60s and early 70s that were published posthumously during the 90s.

Daniil Kharms (1905-1942), along with Alexander Vvedensky, co-founded the OBERIU, the so-called Russian Absurdist group of poets during the 1920s and 30s. Kharms was not allowed to publish his work and survived for a time by writing poems for children. Having feigned insanity to avoid arrest and deportation to the Gulag, he starved to death in a psychiatric hospital in 1942, during the Nazi siege of Leningrad.

Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922) had been called "perhaps the most important modern poet" by Roman Jacobsen, one of the founders

of Structuralist linguistics. His Collected and Selected in English are available in the translation of Paul Schmidt. Khlebnikov died of infection in the winter of 1922, having been weakened by an extended period of starvation.

Alexei Khvostenko (1940-2004) deserves a larger, “literary” audience, but his outsider status is unlikely to be reversed posthumously and outside the Russian context, requiring an appreciation of him as a multi-artist (poet, singer/bard, collagist/sculptor) and an awareness of his immense popularity as a persona non grata during the exhilarating cultural moment of the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the Soviet status quo was still in place but the liberating/decadent influences of the West had flooded in. Khvost (his nickname means “Tail”) lived in Paris after his 1977 expulsion from the USSR. Alex Cigale’s translations of his seminal minimalist-serialist poem is at <http://intranslation.brooklynrail.org/russian/the-suspector> and an early seminal piece of Russian prose poetry, “The Dread Tree” is in the current issue of *The St. Petersburg Review* (4/5).

While still in his teens, **Semyon Kirsanov** (1906-1972) was the organizing force in his native Odessa in 1921 behind the Southern Association of Futurists. In 1925, Vladimir Mayakovsky published two of his early poems in his Constructivist journal LEF, having met the younger poet on a visit to Odessa. Upon moving to Moscow the same year, Kirsanov began an apprenticeship with Mayakovsky and the poet Nikolay Aseev and, in the public imagination, inherited his mentor’s torch after Mayakovsky’s death in 1930.

Together with Velimir Khlebnikov, **Alexei Kruchenykh** (1886-1968) is considered the inventor of zaum, or trans-rational poetry. Kruchenykh wrote the libretto for the Futurist opera Victory Over the Sun, with sets by Kazimir Malevich. He is also primarily responsible for the production of the great Futurist artist books, many of them written by his hand. The long-lived Kruchenykh served as an essential link for the post-war generation of Russian poets of the 1950s – the so-called Lianozovo School, Moscow Conceptualists, and poets like – to the work of the preceding generations, not yet available in print.

The grudgingly respectful words of Marina Tsvetaeva sum up well **Vladimir Mayakovsky**’s life and work: “A rebel among poets; a poet among rebels.” Having lost his father at an early age, Mayakovsky (1893-1930) moved with his family in 1906 from Baghdati, Georgia, where he was born, to Moscow. He began to compose poetry following one of his arrests for political activity, during a period of solitary confinement in 1909. (His Marxist education had begun well before his formal one

ended at age 15, when his mother could no longer pay the school fees.) The 1912 Futurist publication *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* contained Mayakovsky's first published poems, along with the influential manifesto of that name. A trained visual artist, Mayakovsky made significant contributions to theater, cinema, and particularly to early Soviet propaganda poster art and as editor of the Constructivist journal LEF. Mayakovsky's final work, his famous suicide note: "The love boat has smashed up against the rocks of life."

As one of the so-called "Big Four" (along with Mandelstam, Tsvetaeva, and Akhmatova,) **Boris Pasternak** (1890-1994) needs no introduction other than a reminder that his earliest writings, which he later in life renounced, were in a Futurist vein. Outside Russia, Pasternak is best known as the author of *Doctor Zhivago*, published in 1957, for which he was awarded the 1958 Nobel Prize in Literature that he was forced to decline. Pasternak's other great service to literature was his translations of the plays of Goethe, Schiller, and Shakespeare, which remain deeply popular in Russia.

Serge Segay, born in 1947 in Murmansk, completed his studies at the Leningrad Institute of Theater, Music, and Cinematography. From 1974 he lived in Yeysk (on the Azov sea), moving to St. Petersburg in 1997, and in 1998 to Kiel, Germany. He and his wife, the poet Rea Nikonova, have been credited with reviving the Zaum poetry of the Russian Silver Age avant-garde, editing and publishing *Transponance* (1979-1987,) a renowned Russian underground hand-made journal, covers of which can be viewed at The Sackner Archives. In 1998, they were awarded the Andrei Bely Prize for "special services to literature" for their preservation of the history and poetry of Russian Futurism. His Selected Poems in English, exoDICKERING, are forthcoming in Alex Cigale's translations from Xexoxial Editions.

As part of the Constructivist movement, in his early work **Ilya Selvinsky** (1899-1968) attempted to implement "a scientific approach in the realm of poetry." Later in life, one of the beloved lyrical poets of the so-called War Generation, he served as a correspondent at the front the entire period of WWII. As a Pravda correspondent, he was a member of Captain Otto Schmidt's famous polar expedition (1933-1934) along the entire Russian coast of the Arctic Ocean to the easternmost tip of the Chukchi Peninsula.

Igor Severyanin (1887-1941) made dandyism, pretentiousness, and vulgarity, in the sense of bad taste, into high art. His work, characterized by aesthetization and sentimentalization verging on parody, included con-

stant, megalomaniacal, self-conscious proclamation of himself as a genius (hence the Ego in Ego-Futurism). Perhaps more than any other poet of his time, he succeeded by dint of his persona to “capture the public imagination and reach stardom”. Severyanin was one of the first poets to leave Soviet Russia; following the 1917 revolution, he lived in Tallinn, Estonia until his death.

Vadim Shershenevich (1893-1942,) born the same year as Mayakovsky, was old enough to have begun a Symbolist, vied for leadership among the Cubo-Futurists, help found Ego-Futurism, move on to become a leading spokesman and theoretician for Imaginism, and, in 1926, to declare it and the avant-garde dead: “Poetry has become polemic ... poetry without lyricism is as good as a race horse without a leg... the failure of imaginism is ... it always insisted on poetization of poetry.” He moved on to theater, both as writer and director, libretti, and screenwriting, also doing translations of Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Brecht. He died of tuberculosis in 1942.

As a leading voice of the so-called Russian “60s Generation,” **Andrey Voznesensky** (1933-2010,) in addition to gaining world-class recognition as a poet, made significant social contributions. As one of the co-founders of Russian PEN, he was the organization’s Vice President until his passing. Near the end of his life, he was instrumental in the creation of the Pasternak Museum. Voznesensky’s obituaries recounted the tributes paid him by Pasternak and W. H. Auden, as well as his friendship with Allen Ginsberg, which yielded for him an international audience and a role as Russia’s unofficial cultural ambassador. His great popularity as a performer was augmented in that scores of his verses were turned into songs and he was the librettist of a beloved Rock Opera, *Juno and Avos’*. He acknowledged his debt to Russian Futurism and to Mayakovsky specifically, both in the form and the contents of his poems. As testimony of his restless experimentation, see link to his Videoms on his Russian PEN page. Alex Cigale’s and Dana Golin’s tribute to him in English is at *Big Bridge*.

Appendix B: Links to the Poets

Click on the links below for more information.

[David Burliuk](#)

[Velimir Khlebnikov](#)

[Alexei Kruchenykh](#)

[Igor Severyanin](#)

[Nikolay Aseyev](#)

[Vasilisk Gnedov](#)

[Boris Pasternak](#)

[Vladimir Mayakovsky](#)

[Daniil Kharms](#)

[Vadim Shershenevich](#)

[Ilya Selvinsky](#)

[Semyon Kirsanov](#)

[Andrei Voznesensky](#)

[Alexei Khvostenko](#)

[Serge Segay](#)

Appendix C: Collection of Futurism Links

Click on the links below for more information.

[Russian Futurism / Hyalea](#)

[Ego Futurist](#)

[PDFs of Russian Futurist books in the Getty Museum collection, including A Slap in the Face of Public Taste, Klhebnikov's Works: 1906-1908, Vladimir Kamensky's Tango with Cows, and Mayakovsky's Tragedy, illustrated by Burlyuk.](#)

[Vladimir Mayakovsky's 1916 book, *Simple as Mooing*](#)

[Audio recordings of Vladimir Mayakovsky](#)

[Victory Over the Sun: a Supersaga by Alexei Kruchenykh](#)

[LEF: journal Constructivism founded and edited by Vladimir Mayakovsky;](#)

[For manifesto click here.](#)

[Slap in the Face of Public Taste](#)

[Oberiu: The Russian Absurdists](#)

Two translations of F. W. Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto:
[The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism](#)
[The Futurist Manifesto](#)

(ěm)

A REVIEW OF TEXT AND IMAGE



Fall 2012



MANAGING EDITORS

Daniele Pantano
J. R. Miller

ART EDITOR

Nicole Renée Pantano

ASSOCIATE FICTION EDITOR

Matthew Antonio

ASSOCIATE NON-FICTION EDITOR

A. A. Singh

(ěm): A Review of Text and Image considers art, poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, drama, graphic narratives, book reviews, etc. We currently only accept electronic submissions. Please visit our website for guidelines: <http://www.em-review.com/submit.html> Our reading period is from September 1st through May 31st. Simultaneous submissions are accepted, as long as the editors are promptly notified of acceptance elsewhere.

Copyright ©2012 by *(ěm): A Review of Text and Image*

ISSN: 2325-4459

Published in the United States.

Contents

ART	
8xx – Weldon Kees	6
FICTION	
Homecoming – Jon Chopan	7
POETRY	
Absalom – E.G. Cunningham	13
POETRY	
Landscape With Fucking Squirrels – Hugh Behm-Steinberg	14
POETRY	
A Word In A Nest of Birds – Hugh Behm-Steinberg	15
CREATIVE NONFICTION	
Thank You – Paul Lisicky	16
ART	
I'll Tell You Why – Nance Van Winckel	17
ART	
One Key – Nance Van Winckel	18
POETRY	
Guide To Snaring Coyotes – Lois Marie Harrod	19
PHOTO ESSAY	
The Language of Alligators – Katherine Riegel	20
FICTION	
A Tail of Space – Joseph Pravda	26
FICTION	
Openings (2004) – Richard Kostelanetz	27
ART	
Qualcosa si muove – Cesaro Lucchini	35
ART	
Quel che Rimane – Cesaro Lucchini	36
ART	
Quel che Rimane Paesaggio – Cesaro Lucchini	37
POETRY	
Map 2 – Joanne Ashcraft	38
POETRY	
Map 3 – Joanne Ashcraft	40
POETRY	
Map 4 – Joanne Ashcraft	41
FICTION	
Pressing – Jerred Metts	44
POETRY	
Petrarch #191 – Tim Atkins	56
POETRY	
Petrarch #160 – Tim Atkins	57
POETRY	
Petrarch #164.1 – Tim Atkins	58

ART	
	Heavy Warehouse – Steve Javiel..... 59
ART	
	Boom – Steve Javiel..... 60
CREATIVE NONFICTION	
	Waters: A Collage – Donna Steiner 61
POETRY	
	Hell, Sarte Said, Is Other People – Jürgen Becker, Okla Elliott, trans 71
POETRY	
	Tell Me How You’re Doing – Jürgen Becker, Okla Elliott, trans..... 72
DRAMA	
	The Waiting Room – Weldon Kees 73
POETRY	
	Unusual Turtles – Theodore Worozbyt..... 96
ART	
	Disassemblage – Peter Fine 97
ART	
	Drip – Peter Fine 98
FICTION	
	The Wager – Ken Poyner 99
POETRY	
	Back To Futurism – Alex Cigale..... 100
COMIC	
	Ballad of Rosalind – Andrew Stilborn 160
FICTION	
	Kwik Stop – Joanne Brent Leake..... 164
POETRY	
	The Momentous Life of a Drip of Paint – Alifair Skebe 173
FICTION	
	Me & Jesus – Lori Sublett..... 181
POETRY	
	High Maintenance – James Reidel..... 182
POETRY	
	The Home For Friendly Girls – James Reidel..... 183
POETRY	
	Voting Habits – James Reidel..... 184
POETRY	
	Cooping – James Reidel 186
CREATIVE NONFICTION	
	She Would Love to See China – Patricia Smith 187
CONTRIBUTORS 203