INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
DOVID KNUT: BIBLICAL IMAGIST IN TRANSLATION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Carla Elaine Johnson, B.A., M.A., C.A.S.

*****

The Ohio State University
2000

Dissertation Committee:  
Professor Irene Masing-Delic, Adviser
Professor Claudio Fogu
Professor Valerie A. Pellegrino

Approved by:
Professor Irene Masing-Delic
Adviser
Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures
Graduate Program
Copyright by
Carla Elaine Johnson
2000
ABSTRACT

Dovid Knut (1900-1955) is a neglected poet whose life and works spanned an all too brief period in literary circles of Paris in the 1920's and 1930's. Knut's work includes poetry, articles and sketches of other émigré writers living in Paris during the so-called First Wave of Russian emigration. During World War II, Knut played an active role in the Jewish Resistance in Toulouse. He eventually emigrated to Israel in 1949, where he later died. This emigration, along with other factors, such as his all-pervasive theme of "yearning for a return to the Promised Land of Israel" and his markedly Biblical imagery drawn from the Old Testament, to some extent isolated Knut from his fellow émigrés. In the literary circles of the time period in question nostalgia for Russia and disorientation in the new country were prevalent themes. Knut stood apart. Whether his Biblical orientation and striving to emigrate to Israel isolated him or not, there is certainly a marked dearth of literature on him. Perhaps his not having had either a Petersburg or Moscow background - he was born in Bessarabia - also was a factor.

The purpose of this work is to introduce Dovid Knut, the poet, to a Western, English-speaking audience, through a general introduction to Knut and a translation of his poetry. This translation, the first of its kind into any language to the best of my knowledge, covers his entire published poetic oeuvre, namely the five collections: Монах
тысячелетий [Of My Millennia] (1925), Вторая книга [Second Book] (1927), Сатир [The Satyr] (1930), Парижские ночи [Parisian Nights] (1932), and Насущная любовь [Love's Sustenance] (1938). The only exceptions are the cycle Prarodina (First Homeland), not translated because of its incomplete state.

By presenting the poet in translation, along with a biographical sketch of his life and a general characterization of his poetry, this dissertation attempts to rectify the neglect of a highly original émigré poet. Knut's biblical images are blended with a marked sensuality and these strands yield both idiosyncratic and universal poetry that I believe will yet find its readership.
DEDICATION

To my father, Charles Johnson, in loving memory,
and to my mother, Claudia R. Johnson, for her devotion.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Professor Irene Masing-Delic, for her encouragement, support and guidance in completing this dissertation. I shall miss our stimulating conversations.

I also would like to thank the members of my examination committee: Professors Claudio Fogu, Valerie Pellegrino and Reuben Ahroni. Their professionalism and dedication made all the difference.

Many thanks to the Graduate School, at The Ohio State University for its support, especially Dean James Siddens, for his encouragement, and Tim Watson in Graduation Services for his assistance.

I would like to thank the staff of the Slavic Department, especially Danielle McLaughlin, Susan Pitcock and Jackie Hartzell, who helped with the many little details involved with this dissertation, and great computer support.

Thanks to the members of Company of Writers and the informal Ohio State English Department dissertation writing group led by Barbara Maum, for the many hours they devoted to reading various chapters of the manuscript.
I would like to express my deep appreciation to others who provided suggestions and encouragement during this process: Drs. Eve Levin, Beverly Moss, Roger Blackwell, Theron Ford, Jerry Stern, Stephanie Ford and Lee Cohen.

Thanks to the staff of the Central Ohio School of Massage, and especially Jeremiah Tann, L.M.T., who kept my hands in "typing shape" and kept me laughing when I needed it most.

I would like to express my eternal gratitude to my family and friends, especially my mother, for her support, love, encouragement and prayers.

Finally, although my father did not live to see this work completed, he was my strongest advocate. Without his love and support, I would not have gotten this far and so my strongest thanks and eternal love are with him.
VITA

June 30, 1965  Born - Baltimore, Maryland

1986  A.B. French/
      International Relations,
      Randolph-Macon Woman's
      College.

1987  B.A. Russian,
      University of Maryland.

1992  M.A., Russian,
      State University of New York,
      Albany.

1995  C.A.S., Russian Translation,
      State University of New York,
      Albany

1992-2000  Graduate Teaching Associate,
           The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field:

Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Copyright Page .......................................................................................................................... ii  
Abstract ...................................................................................................................................... iii  
Dedication ................................................................................................................................... v  
Acknowledgments ....................................................................................................................... vi  
Vita ............................................................................................................................................... viii  

Chapters:  
Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1  
1. Chapter 1: Biographical Sketch ............................................................................................... 17  
2. Chapter 2: Themes and Imagery in Knut's Poetic Oeuvre ......................................................... 42  
3. Chapter 3: Translation: Of My Millennia - (1925) ................................................................. 64  
4. Chapter 4: Translation: Second Book -(1927) ..................................................................... 116  
5. Chapter 5: Translation: Satyr -(1930) ................................................................................. 211  
6. Chapter 6: Translation: Parisian Nights -(1932) ................................................................. 229  
7. Chapter 7: Translation: Love’s Sustenance -(1938) ............................................................ 282  
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................... 366  
Bibliography ................................................................................................................................. 369  

ix
INTRODUCTION

Dovid Knut (1900-1955), born Fiksman, a Russian-Jewish poet of the First-Wave Russian emigration (1917-1925), is still relatively unknown in both the West and in Russia, like many others of his generation. While renewed interest in the literary production of some first-wave Russian émigré poets is flourishing, for example, in Khodasevich's, Dovid Knut, is still awaiting his discovery. Thus, this dissertation does not focus on some specific work, theme, or device by this poet, but offers an introduction to and translation of his complete texts. There being a primary need for a general introduction to the poet, I have opted for a translation and general presentation of his work.

The translation presented in this dissertation, to my knowledge, is the first translation of Knut's complete published œuvre into any language. Only individual poems have been translated into French, although he lived in France for twenty-nine years. There are Hebrew translations of various Knut poems, but no complete translation of the poet's poetic œuvre to date. In the poet's last (and perhaps only)
homeland, Israel, a Collected Works\textsuperscript{1}, in Russian is being issued. As the Editor of CW, V. Khazan, notes, the very collecting process was a difficult one. Tracing and putting together published poems from various émigré newspapers, journals and anthologies and editing these has been a tedious and lengthy process. Translation, it seems, will have to follow the completion of the CW. My dissertation then is really a first effort to acquaint a non-Russian readership with Knut's poetry. Furthermore, my translations cover his entire published poetic oeuvre, namely the five collections: Моих тысячелетий [Of My Millennia] (1925), Вторая книга [Second Book] (1927), Сатир [The Satyr] (1930), Парижские ночи [Parisian Nights] (1932), and Насущная любовь [Love's Sustenance] (1938). The only exception is the incomplete cycle Prarodina (First Homeland), which I chose not to translate. It has been published in CW. The reason for my exclusion of this collection is its incompleteness. I do plan to address the six poems in Prarodina, along with the dozen or so other poems, which Knut never included in any collection, in a future work on the author.

Knut is not only unknown to a western readership, but was not widely read in Russian émigré circles either. One reason for the relative lack of interest in Knut in France (i.e. among other Russian émigrés) may be found in his marked interest in Jewish themes. This dissertation is entitled, Dovid Knut: Biblical Imagist in Translation. The title points to the source where Knut found much of his inspiration for his Jewish themes and images - the Old Testament. Reliance on this text lends a great deal

\textsuperscript{1}Khazan, V., Dovid Knout: Collected Writings, in Two Volumes, vol. 1. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997. From now on, this will be referred to as CW.
of originality to Knut's poetry, but it is possibly a factor in the relative neglect of the poet, both in the twenties and thirties, as well as now. Older Russian émigrés concentrated on the loss and nostalgia for the motherland; the younger Russian émigré poets spoke of their present relationship with France. Knut was not even from Russia proper, since he was born in Bessarabia. He therefore could not share in the cult of Petersburg or Moscow, and other "sacred" spaces of Russian culture. For this and other reasons, Knut favored the "Jewish theme" of a future homeland in Israel. In my view, he could even be labeled a Zionist, even though he never officially became one.

Although Knut was looking to the future, unlike his past-oriented elders and present-oriented contemporaries, in a paradoxical way, he too was immersed in the past. In his case, however, this past was the "millennia" of pre-Christian times, to be revived in the new Israeli homeland. Knut's immersion into the distant past of the Jewish people is inextricably linked to his hopes of finding his only true home in the future, and it is what makes him particularly appealing to me. A clear comprehension of Old Testament themes is an important and necessary consideration in any serious discussion of Dovid Knut's work and indeed, his life. Only a complete translation of Knut's poetry can clearly demonstrate this mixture of past and future. Knut follows the Jewish tradition of "chesbon hanefesh", i.e. "the examined life", and draws heavily on Old Testament imagery to present his quest for God, a theme that ultimately emerges as the main strand of his work, as well as his life. The prevalent biblical themes which form the very core of Knut's poetic oeuvre and philosophy warrant a close reading of the text. It can be
argued that a translation in essence, is a close reading of the text. It certainly entails a thorough reading and displays an interpretation.

Always, not just an émigré, but a double émigré - a Jewish Russian in Moldavia, a Jewish Russian in Paris - Knut apparently sought a stable access to and a recapturing of the promised land and one-and-single home of the Jew in diaspora. He could not, thus, share in his fellow exiled émigrés' yearning for a lost Russia, or at least not fully. The Russia found in Knut's works is overshadowed by a nostalgia for a biblical homeland, which once existed in the world of the Old Testament and now had reemerged in the land of Palestine, soon to become Israel.

As already stated, Knut was an émigré par excellence. He was exiled not only from Russia (Bessarabia), but also from a Biblical land that occupied a purely spiritual-textual space. He ultimately emigrated to a "third" homeland, the reborn Israel. Whether in the end he truly came to feel that he had found his home in Israel is a query this study does not address. The bulk of his life was spent in France. However Knut only wrote a few articles in French newspapers and two non-fiction works in French. All his poetry was written in Russian. Thus, it is the state of being an exile among exiles that this dissertation is most concerned with, both by translating the poetry, where his longings are so fully expressed, and by discussing his biblical themes and images. This state of eternal estrangement is what, to my mind, makes Knut a poet of universal appeal. It is not just a "historical loss," such as that of Russia, that he conveys in his poems, but an "eternal existential situation," familiar to many categories of twentieth-century intellectuals and to outsiders of all times.
The quest for the "ultimate home," is, after all, a universal theme, regardless of the specific cultural garb in which it is clothed. This convergence of the specific and the universal is, to state it again, one of the qualities that makes Knut a poet deserving of a broader audience. He has gradually come into his own in Russian-speaking Israel, where he died and where he has a faithful following. He also enjoys something of a minor revival in Russia.\(^2\) His presence in the English-speaking world, as mentioned, is minimal. My dissertation, in presenting Knut's work and translating it into English, seeks to rectify this lacuna. My modest homage to Knut's oeuvre is a prose translation which, wherever possible, conveys something of the poetic effect.

Since the main purpose of this dissertation is to examine Knut's published poetic oeuvre through the use of translation, I shall briefly discuss the basic translation principles followed in this dissertation. This discussion is followed by the first chapter, which is a biographical sketch of Knut's short and turbulent life. In the second chapter, I offer an overview of the main themes, imagery, lexicon and metrical patterns used in Knut's verse. These two chapters are followed by five chapters of translation, including commentary. The five chapters correspond to the five published collections of Knut's poetry: Мойх тысячелетий [Of My Millennia] (1925), Вторая книга [The Second Book] (1927), Сатир [The Satyr] (1930), Паризские ночи [Parisian Nights] (1932), and Насущная любовь [Love's Sustenance] (1938). The conclusion

\(^2\) My thanks to Visiting Professor I. Esaulov of RGGU, Moscow, who noted the upswing of interest in Knut in Russia. Russian scholar Fyodor Fyodorov, living in Latvia, testifies to this revival in the sense that he has written on the poet himself, in particular, Knut's use of Old Testament themes.
presents some suggestions for what directions future scholarship should take.

The order of this outline recapitulates my three main purposes in writing this dissertation. First, I wish to present Knut to the English-speaking world. Second, Knut's literary contribution has been unjustly forgotten with the passage of time. With the upcoming centennial of his birth, in September of the year two-thousand, this is an ideal time to reflect upon the poet's contributions to Russian poetry. Finally, the aspect of Knut that the English-speaking world knows is that of the resistance leader during World War II, but not the poet. To redress this imbalance is my third purpose with the dissertation.

Since this work primarily examines Knut's published work through translation, it is important to consider the principles of translation used here within the context of existing theories of literary translation. This orientation shall begin with a brief presentation of the translation theories that I have drawn upon in this work, with an emphasis on the intermediary function of the translator.

In The Translator's Invisibility, L. Venuti notes the peculiar place of literary translation in the world of publishing.

"A translated text is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text- the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the "original". (Venuti 1991:1)"
Venuti does not argue, either in *The Translator's Invisibility* (1991) or in *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology* (1992) for the "flawless" translation, i.e. one which reads like it is, in fact, the original document. Indeed, Venuti acknowledges that there is a key difference between the original and the translated work.

"The 'original' is a form of self-expression appropriate to the author, a copy true to his personality or intention, an image endowed with resemblance, whereas the translation can be no more than a copy of a copy, derivative, simulacral, false, an image without resemblance."(Venuti 1992:3)

It is time, he argues, that we acknowledge this truth and act accordingly. The primary thrust of Venuti's *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, is that the role of the translator should be examined and critiqued. This is an issue that was rarely discussed in the earlier stages of translation theory, but which recently has become a major consideration. A plethora of works in the field of translation theory, particularly in the 1980's and 1990's provides an expanding sphere of opportunity for dialogue regarding the practice and art of translation in general and the translator's role as intermediary in particular. In the past, translation was considered "to be an invisible practice, everywhere around us, inescapably present, but rarely acknowledged. It "almost never figured into discussions of the translations we all inevitably read."(Venuti 1992:1) Venuti clearly is speaking of the 19th and early 20th centuries, when translation was not discussed or critiqued as a separate art on a regular basis.
Venuti and other translation theorists of the 1980's and 1990's, in particular S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere, E. Gentzler, and C. Schäffner, advocate the critique of the "invisible" translator and a more thorough re-examination of the translator's role of "silent co-author." Unfortunately, a reader is more likely than not to encounter a translation which is "flawless," in the sense of "correct," in its rendering of the original text into the target language. Thus, the "seamless" translation, a transformation of the author's words into a work that is "appreciated" by the reader, is not necessarily the best translation. Should the translation be a "flawless or seamless one," it will create the false impression that the author lacked individual style and that he wrote like thousands of others. In short, what Venuti and other translation theorists advocate is the translator who makes his own subjectivity part of the translation, who makes choices of parameters that specifically appeal to him and who does not try to do everything in the name of a "correct" translation.

As a translator of Knut's published poetic oeuvre, it is this very inherent criticism of the art of translation that has guided my choices in rendering Knut's work from Russian into English. I agree that certain selections have to be made in each translation process. Having chosen my stance, I shall present a brief overview of the translation theory that is relevant to this dissertation, as background, followed by a discussion of my own personal theory used in this dissertation.

Until recently, translation theory was discussed in bits and pieces in various essays by a wide variety of authors, writers, professional translators, theorists, essayists and others. The creation of a proper field of "translation studies" occurred at a 1976 conference in Leuven,
Belgium. (Bassnett & Lefevere 1998:x) During the 1980's and 1990's a number of books have appeared which have further defined translation theory. As Venuti points out, the field is still relatively new. Translation is usually considered a craft. Translators who "work from contract to contract and move from one foreign text to another, focusing on the delivery of the manuscript and therefore devoting little time to sustained methodological reflection" therefore do not have either the leisure or even interest to develop a theory. "[Those] speaking or writing about translation are often represented as taking time off from their special 'art' or 'craft', constituting 'voices from the field'" (Venuti 1992:1) and hence feel uncomfortable in the field of theory. Yet it is the craftsmen, craftswomen and practitioners who should be the creators of translation theory with their thorough grasp of the issues involved.

Translation theory offers widely varying schools of thought. While all stress accuracy and the need of the translator as craftsman to know well both the subject and the source language, there is one school which has become more prominent in recent translation theory. This is the post-structuralist school, which, as Venuti notes, "[has] initiated a radical reconsideration of the traditional topoi [commonplaces, C.E.J.] of translation theory. It arose "largely as commentaries on Walter Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator"" (1992:6) and has been termed a post-structuralist school. The primary advocates of the post-

---

3 A number of these books are by Bassnett and/or Lefevere, including Translation/History/Culture: A sourcebook, Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame, Translation, and Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation. Bassnett is the series editor for a dozen books on translation, including cultural and linguistic translation. For more information, see the separate section on translation theory references provided in the bibliography.
structuralist movement in translation theory include Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. They emphasize the concept of the "afterlife" or Überleben, first formulated by Walter Benjamin, which extends the original into an "immortal form" - the translation. By "immortal form", Benjamin refers to a text, a translation, which calls for further responses. Each version, or translation, serves as a basis for additional responses, in the forms of new translations. Thus the life of the text is extended through both its readership and its responses (i.e. other translators).

In the classic essay, "The Task of the Translator", Walter Benjamin's introduction to a translation of Baudelaire's Tableaux Parisiens (Parisian Pictures), the very existence of translation and the traits of superior versus inferior translations are redefined. One of the basic assumptions of any literary work is that it has the ability to be translated. Benjamin challenges this assumption to a certain extent by questioning the "translatability" of any work. "Will an adequate translator ever be found among the totality of its readers?... Does its nature lend itself to translation, and therefore, in view of the significance of the mode, call for it?" (Benjamin 1955:70) When looking at the viability of translation, it is clear that some texts, or at least some linguistic, stylistic and cultural nuances might be untranslatable. From the point of view of Benjamin, a translation is a 'mode' and thus not a static work. It calls for a selective response, that in its turn, calls for another selective response. The continuation of the original work, though it is considered "final" as a published product, is given in its translation. It is extended by it into a more flexible form that guarantees continuation. Translation becomes the art continuation, even making it "immortal." "Just as the
manifestations of life are intimately connected with the phenomenon of life without being of importance to it, a translation issues from the original - not so much from its life as from its afterlife." (Benjamin 1955:71)

It is through translation, therefore, that an original work gains a new life, as well as new responses. The act of translating is itself a response to the text. For an English-speaking audience, many classics including the Bible, to The Iliad and The Odyssey, as well as the Song of Roland and numerous other national epics, are best known in translation. And it is in translation that these and other works have been explored, examined and interpreted. If one agrees with Benjamin, that a translation extends an original work into an "afterlife," whether it becomes famous or not, then the role of translators is indeed both great and not sufficiently rewarded.

This theory of post-structuralist translation theory differs widely from the traditional view that a translation is a photocopy of an original text, conveyed by an agent (i.e. the translator), whose skill is largely noted by his or her absence from the text. In other words, the best translator is a master of invisibility, one who conveys the essence of the original text without demeaning its author or the reader. This then is a view I do not share. In my translation of Knut, I follow the "post-structuralist" principle of making my selections of certain aspects that I deem important and of neglecting others. Like Benjamin I believe it is the role of subsequent translators to complete the lacunae I have left.

Naturally, the traditional demand that a translator know both the source and target language well remains in force in post-structuralist theory also. Indeed, Nabokov, in "The Art of the Translation", divides
translators into three categories: the scholar, the "well meaning hack" and the professional writer. (Nabokov 1981: 319). Of the three, I consider myself a "scholar." This means that I lay claim to the linguistic skills of the scholar, but not the poetic talent of the professional writer. Combining this classification with Benjamin's stance, I chose not to render the metrics of Knut's poetry, nor to seek rhyme patterns. It is Knut's imagery which is the most important facet of his poetry to me. And it is this aspect that I have tried to convey. Thus my translation is a prosaic one with imagery as the most salient poetic feature to be preserved. I have therefore also aimed at preserving semantics as faithfully as possible without carrying fidelity to the original text too far. A translator who carries fidelity to the source language text to the point of insisting to preserve what the target language resists, risks creating an "abusive" translation. An "abusive" translation is one in which the translator, in an attempt to faithfully render the original text into the target language, makes a critical error. He, or she, changes the translation in a manner inconsistent with the target language. If the target language does not have a corresponding value or cultural nuance similar to that of the source language of the original text, a translator who adds these values violates the very nature of the translation process. This process requires fidelity to both the source and the target languages. In the striving to re-create an author's authentic personality and all textual nuances in literalist terms, a translator runs the genuine risk of distorting the source text.

From the postructuralist point of view, "a translation emerges as an active reconstitution of the foreign text mediated by the irreducible
linguistic, discursive, and ideological differences of the target-language culture." (Venuti 1992:10). Like Nabokov, Benjamin argues in favor of accuracy, as a means of demonstrating the "kinship" of languages. But this kinship does not necessarily include a notion of "identicalness" in the translated work. In other words, similarity of languages does not mean that the original and the translated work will be perceived as exactly the same product. Indeed, as Benjamin notes: "If the kinship of languages manifests itself in translations, this is not accomplished through a vague likeness between adaptation and original. It stands to reason that kinship does not necessarily involve likeness." (Benjamin 1955:74)

In looking at translation as a bridge between two languages and cultural contexts, the concept of a complete communicative understanding seems appropriate. Literary translation requires a synthesis of the creative writer or poet with the knowledgeable linguist. There is a broad difference between a translation and a literary work. If one considers a translation a new "original work," which is what poststructuralist devotees of Benjamin believe, then a translation is a literary creation also and the translator is entitled to his "creative selections." Of course, this entails responsibility. With regard to Russian literary texts in translation, this is especially true. Most English-speaking audiences reading Russian literature will do so in translation unless they have knowledge of Russian. Even for students of Russian however, reading lengthy classics in the original is generally reserved for more advanced students after several years of study. I hope my dissertation makes clear that I am making very conscious choices in my transmission of Knut's poetry and that the reader cannot expect to find "everything" in
my translation. Like Benjamin, I believe, my translation should serve as the basis for future ones.

Perhaps this stance is in accordance with Russian translation practice especially that of its great modern poets. As has been pointed out, the poet has "different functions in different societies." In Russian society the poet has often taken on the role of conscience, or that of "its historian" (Bassnett: 1998:57-58), especially in twentieth-century Russia. Pasternak offers a prime example. His translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet into Russian, for example, is a case where the author-turned-translator, makes the translated text into both Shakespeare's and his own work. Pasternak, the poet in Stalin's time, is clearly visible in his translation of "Hamlet", which makes clear allusions to the oppressive situation in Russia by subtle shifts of emphasis. Without comparing my role to that of the great poet, I, too, make Knut serve my "purposes" and "interests," namely a deep-rooted love for the Old Testament and its imagery.

To sum up: How has translation theory affected my method and manner of translating the work of Dovid Knut? Knut's primary oeuvre is poetic and his work contains biblical and sensual images. One trait of Dovid Knut's poetry is his use of archaic or slightly outdated terms. In transferring various nuances, of Knut's poetry, is it better to lean to the "abusive" translation, or to a more traditional mainstream translation, or a post-structuralist Benjamin inspired type translation, where the product itself becomes yet another original?

For the purposes of this dissertation, I have not tried to render a metrical translation, nor attempted to reproduce the rhyme sequence
employed by Knut in his poetic oeuvre. I have chosen a fairly literal prose translation that covers the semantics adequately but I have also placed emphasis on certain aspects, such as imagery. Since I cannot create a prosodically equivalent translation I have not. I opt instead for a non-metrical rendering that conveys theme and imagery.

Thus, I do not seek to create an Americanized version of Knut's oeuvre. Nor do I seek to have English-speaking readers enter into Knut's Russian world, by attempting to recreate the flavor of the rhyme scheme and metrical patterns, although I do attempt to maintain Knut's use of repetition, single word sentences and archaisms. The key to Knut's poetic oeuvre is his use of Biblical imagery and sensual themes. Therefore, my aim is to render into a fairly literal English translation the biblical imagery that Knut so eloquently evokes in his work. For now, the acknowledgment I seek would be to have my translation read naturally, as though it were written in the target language, in this case English. My hope as a scholar is that perhaps in the future, a more poetically gifted translator, one closer to the Nabokian ideal, will be able to use my translation as a basis for a more poetic, and commensurate version.

The essence of Knut's poetry and the translation technique used will be discussed in more detail in the introduction to Knut's poetic oeuvre, which appears in Chapter Three. Before discussing the poetry in detail, however, it is important to present a brief overview of Knut's life and the themes that are present throughout his life, and appear, in part, in his poetry. The following chapter therefore will present a biographical sketch of Knut's short and turbulent life. It will also address certain choices Knut made, both professionally and personally, which
emphasized his "exiled" émigré status as well as certain historical factors which definitely would have affected some of Knut's major decisions - both with regard to his poetry and life.
CHAPTER 1

DOVID KNUT: MAN OF LETTERS, MAN OF CHANGE
BIографICAL SKETCH

Dovid Knut's life demonstrates that he was a man who sought to "resist evil" and who therefore not only enlisted in the Resistance movement, but also chose to explore universal philosophical questions in his work. His choices, both thematic and personal, were inspired in part by these two positions. One difficulty in exploring Knut's life, for Knut's scholars however, is the reality that there is less written about Knut's life before emigration in 1920 and during the war years of 1940-1944. With this caveat, let us now turn to the facts of his biography.

Dovid Knut was born David Mironovich Fiksman on September 23 (September 10 - O.S.), 1900 in Orgeev, Bessarabia, which is a small town near Kishinev. His father, Meir (Miron) Fiksman, was a grocer who ran a small store in Orgeev. Little, if anything, is known about Knut's mother beyond her maiden name, "Knut", since the poet chose it to be his poetic pseudonym. His childhood was that of a typical Jewish boy living beyond the Pale of Settlement, as Bessarabia was beyond the Pale, at the turn of the century.¹

¹The edict of May 31, 1835, restricted Jews to the following areas: Grodno, Vil'na, Volhynia, Podolia, Minsk, and Ekaterinoslav guberniyas; the Bialystok and Bessarabia regions; Kiev guberniya (except the city of Kiev), Kherson guberniya (except Nikolaev),
Like most Jewish children, he received his basic education in the Russian school system; however, as a Jew, his future educational choices were restricted due to official governmental policy. This policy imposed quotas on higher education and instituted laws which isolated Jews from the rest of the Russian population by restricting professional and other choices. Enforced Jewish separateness reached its height in 1882 with the establishment of so-called "May Laws" by Tsar Alexander III. These laws essentially were the result of anti-semitic sentiment which had been more openly displayed since the death of Tsar Alexander II. The Anti-Jewish Riots of 1881 were a natural consequence of this growing anti-semitism. Interior Minister M. Ignatiev, himself an anti-semite, under the guise of "urgency", persuaded the Committee of Ministers to enact the May Laws as "resolutions" to social tensions. Once Alexander III gave his approval, the May Laws were adopted and while considered temporary laws, they were enacted as though they were permanent.

In short, the May Laws forbade Jews to live outside the Pale of Settlement, an area defined as the one in which Jews already lived. Trade was restricted to agricultural production in these locations. These laws also forbade Jews to buy or sell property, to hold mortgages and to own property outside of towns. Jews were even forbidden to have a Power of Attorney to manage property or to transact business concerning Taurida (except Sevastopol'), Mogilev and Vitebsk guberniyas (except the villages) and Chernigov and Poltava guberniyas (except two special groups of villages).

2 The name "May Laws" refers to the date, May 3, 1882, when the Tsar Alexander III consented to the "temporary orders" concerning the Jews enacted by the Committee of Ministers.

an estate property. There were also economic losses for Jews related to the fact that they were forbidden to transact business on Sunday and all Christian holidays. Since the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday, this meant another day unavailable for transactions. Thus Jews were not able to benefit as much economically under Alexander III as they had under Alexander II. The May Laws affected the Pale of Settlement areas only; however, since virtually all Jews were forced to live beyond the Pale, i.e. in previously established Jewish areas, these were severe restrictions on Jewish life and prosperity. The only saving grace for Jews was that they were permitted to move freely about Poland, then a part of the Russian Empire, without the same restrictions as Jews living beyond the Pale.

This historical background is worth noting because Knut's life inevitably was affected by it. The period of 1880-1910 was a turbulent one for Russian Jews, marking a peak in pogrom outbreaks. These decades also were crucial for the development of a pro-Zionist movement among Jews living in Russia. This movement raised the question: Was it possible for a Jew to adapt to Russian conditions and create an acceptable life on an individual basis, or would it be better to emigrate to Palestine, or some other land. This was a question the Fiksman family faced also. They answered it eventually by emigrating to Paris.

For some Jews, including the Fiksmans, who lived in a "pogrom-area," these deplorable events made the answer a simple one: leave

---

4 For a fascinating report including minute details of changes in the May Laws, and their reinforcement over time, see The Persecution of the Jews in Russia, originally published in 1891 by the Russo-Jewish Committee in London. [Call Number: DS135R9 R86]. This work includes a map of the Pale of Settlement, including the area of Knut's birth and childhood, Bessarabia.
Russia at all costs. For others, the occurrence of pogroms only strengthened the call for a Jewish national identity within Russian boundaries. Those who identified with this call were the so-called cultural Zionists.5

One event which was a catalyst for Russian Jewry as a whole was the horrific pogrom in 1903, known as the Kishinev Massacre. Kishinev was roughly fifty percent Jewish and fifty percent Christian at the time of the massacre. As the Jewish historian S.M. Dubnow noted, the pogrom which occurred can be directly attributed to the anti-semitic writings and activities of a local journalist and publisher, Krushevan, who was the editor of the newspaper, Bessarabetz since 1897. The Kishinev pogrom was Krushevan's second, and this time successful, attempt to agitate Russians against Jews, and it took place on April 6-7, the seventh and eighth days of the Jewish Passover holiday.⁶ There had been some advance warning, but a lack of official government or local police intervention meant that wholesale pillaging, rape, killing and torture was allowed to continue for nearly 48 hours without any attempts to assist the Jews of Kishinev.⁷ This pogrom directly affected the Fiksman family.

As Dubnow notes, wealthy Jews were able to bribe the local authorities and thus escape the horrors of the pogroms, but the poor

5 Zionists of this type were usually called cultural Zionists as opposed to the political Zionists who were to become prevalent in the 20th century. Cultural Zionists sought a unified Jewish identity, but were not initially seeking exile from Russia to Palestine at this point. They were seeking auto-emancipation, however, i.e. the classification of Jews as a distinct and separate nation.
⁷ As Dubnow also notes, the alleged impetus for the massacre was the murder of a Russian servant girl, purportedly by a Jew, although in reality, her death was caused by her own hand.
ones could not. To which category the Fiksmans belonged is not clear. There is no information regarding the exact fate of the Fiksman family in 1903, during the pogrom. In fact, the only thing that can be safely stated is that the family (partly) survived the pogrom. Certainly Knut’s parents did. How many of his siblings perished, is uncertain.

One of Knut’s stepdaughters, Miriam Degan, (by his second wife, Ariadna Skriabina) states that eight of Knut’s siblings died in the Kishinev Massacre.\(^8\) Knut had at least one brother and one sister living with them in Paris after the family had emigrated in 1920. Knut never referred to the Kishinev pogrom, or any family recounts, about the event. Although he was three years old at the time, and might not have recalled most of the details, he would have mentioned such an event in his poetry. The use of the word “pogrom” in Knut’s poetry is limited to a few references, none of which address the Kishinev pogrom. He could, however, have learned of events surrounding the pogrom from his parents.\(^9\) But there are no references to such statements either. Whatever the number of pogrom victims in the Fiksman family, the horrific event inevitably had an effect on Knut’s outlook on the world. The family would have known about it and the anti-semitic climate, which increased with the annexation of Bessarabia to Romania, certainly would have been one possible factor related to the decision to emigrate. It is unknown whether Knut, then

\(^8\) Miriam Degan, one of Knut’s stepdaughters by his second wife Ariadna Skriabina, is cited as the verifying source for Anatolii Kudriavitski’s claim that eight of Knut’s siblings perished in the Kishinev Massacre. [Literaturnoe obozrenie, 1996, No. 2, p. 54]. This is as cited in Khazan, V., Dovid Knout: Collected Writings In Two Volumes, Volume 1, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997, p. 48

\(^9\) Knut’s father died in the latter part of 1932. (Khazan, V., Dovid Knout: Collected Writings In Two Volumes, Volume 2, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1998, p.663)
twenty, chose to emigrate with the family in 1920 because of the growing anti-semitic climate in Bessarabia, or simply because he wanted to leave. This is an aspect of the poet's life that remains a mystery for future Knut scholars to solve.

As a youth, Knut led a life similar to that of any other Jewish adolescent, except that he had a keen interest in intellectual pursuits. He had a standard gimnaziia training. Since there was a ten percent quota for Jews for admission to the gimnaziia, under the May Laws, this meant that he must have been exceptionally gifted since passing the quota obviously was something that not every Jewish youth could accomplish. 10

Jewish religious and literary education in Russia being severely restricted until 1917, Knut's Jewish education would have been informal, other than synagogue attendance. He worked in his father's grocery store. Attending school in Kishinev, he was passionate about reading, much to his father's dismay, as Knut's father wished him to go into trade. Perhaps therefore his poetic calling, as Knut notes, became something like, "болезни столь же неизлечимой, как рак". 11 In a sense, as V. Khazan 12 notes, Knut's youth is similar to that of the male Jewish

---

10 For further information, see The Persecution of the Jews in Russia, originally published in 1891 by the Russo-Jewish Committee in London. [Call Number: DS135R9 R86]. It should be noted that, "A rescript was issued limiting the proportion of Jewish scholars at universities and gimnasiia to 10 percent in the Pale, 5 outside it and 3 at Moscow and St. Petersburg." [p.17]

11 Ibid., p.36

12 Khazan, V., David Knout: Collected Writings in Two Volumes, Volume 1, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997, p. 36
protagonist, Moisei Liberzon in Mikhail Svetlov's 1927 poetic work, "Bread".14

Knut was especially attracted to the works of Pushkin. It is no accident then that certain Pushkininan images, such as the prophet in "Prorok", occur in Knut's poetry e.g. in the poem "Я, Довид-Ари бен Мейр". Pushkin is also alluded to in "Я помню тусклый кишнеевский вечер", from his 1932 work, Paris Nights, among many other instances.

Another crucial factor in the Fiksman family's decision to emigrate would have included Bessarabia's annexation in 1918 by Romania. Romania proved a virulently anti-semitic country at the time - unlike the former Soviet Union which, at first, pursued a pro-semitic policy. Thus, anti-semitic sentiment in their former home province must have convince the family to go.16 Anti-semitic tactics included illegal arrests, 

13 Mikhail Svetlov (1903-1964) was a Soviet poet, known primarily for his obedience to the party line during the 1930's, under Stalin's regime. Like other "successful" writers of this era, his works were primarily oriented to Stalinist preferences, and thus were patriotic and portrayed the idyll known as the Soviet Union. His work of the 1920's includes some good poetry, however next to the famous poem "Granada", his poem "Bread" has considerable merit in its depiction of a Jewish youth.

14 Svetlov's "Bread" is a four-part poem in which the Jewish youth, Moishe Liberzon is the son of a grocer, Samuel Israelevich Liberzon. Svetlov even mentions the name of the father's grocery store in his poem: "И сидит за одним столом,/ Хлебом с маслом по горло сьят, / <<Еврейский торговый дом — / Самуил Либерзон и сын>>."

15 Knut's mention of Pushkin in Paris Nights is further illuminated in the chapter on the poems from this collection. (Chapter 7)

16 For a more detailed account of official anti-semitism in the Romanian government and the treatment of Jews in Romania in general, see Carol lancu's Les juifs en Roumanie (1919-1938) : De l'émanicipation à la marginalisation, Paris and Louvain: E. Peeters, 1996. Chapter 5, pp. 165-205 are of particular interest for scholars wishing a more detailed account of anti-semitic practices legally sanctioned by the government during the period of 1919-1922, the period when Knut and his family would have made the decision to leave Bessarabia permanently.
the use of nationalist sentiment to remove Jews from positions of economic power, and even the refusal of re-entry to Romania for Jews who left to visit family members in Hungary or Austria. Such people, as Carol lancu notes, were permitted to leave on the condition that they renounce their citizenship and promise, in writing, never to return.

"En automne1919, des Juifs transylvains souhaitant rendre visite à leurs familles de Hongrie ou d'Autriches se virent obligés, afin d'obtenir le passeport nécessaire au voyage, de signer une déclaration dans laquelle ils s'engageaient à ne plus revenir en Roumanie et à renoncer à la citoyenneté roumaine. Dans le district de Maramues, sous l'inspiration d'un député antisémite (Scelea Papuc), les conseils agricoles locaux dépossédèrent les Juifs de leurs terres héritées depuis des générations." [p.167]

"In the autumn of 1919, some Transylvanian Jews wanted to visit their families in Hungary or Austria were obligated, before obtaining the necessary travel passport, to sign a declaration in which they swear never to return to Romania and to renounce their Romanian citizenship. In the Maramues district, under the inspiration of an anti-semitic deputy, (Scelea Papuc), the local agricultural advisors stripped Jews of inherited lands they had held for generations." [p.167]17

When these factors are viewed in combination with others which directly affected Jews in the early twentieth century, most notably the rise of Zionism among Russian Jews in 1906, the decision to emigrate was both logical and necessary. Surely Knut's choice of biblical images, such as those seen in all five published works, as well as his preference for such themes as exile and assimilation, can already be traced back to this period in Knut's life. This is a plausible assumption, as the five year

17 The translation of this passage from Carol lancu's work is mine.
period between his arrival in Paris and the publication of his first
collection of poetry, *Of My Millennia* (1925), does not include radical
changes in his personal situation which would account for Knut's use of
biblical images, like Abraham, Saul, David, Sarah, Cain and Adam, nor
his slight emphasis on his Jewish status. This slight emphasis was
already apparent in his very first poem, "Я, Довид—Ари бен Меир". He
was an unwelcome exile in Paris, just as he had been a very unwelcome
exile in Bessarabia.

With regard to the emergence of Zionism, it should be noted that
its prevalence in 1906 in Russia was the culmination of increasingly
hostile attitudes toward Jews for a number of years. The establishment of
the Pale of Settlement, subsequent Jewish reaction to legal restrictions
and changes in Russian attitudes towards the "Jewish Question", all had
the effect of making the concepts of Zionism more palatable for Russian
Jews during the early twentieth century. As Dubnow notes, the period of
1903-1906 had a "quickening effect upon the national and political
thought of the classes as well as of the masses of Russian Jewry."
Among Russian-Jews, it is during this period that a "nationalistic" attitude
arose, which included "Zionism, with its theory of a new "exodus". [And]
at the other pole was the Social-Democratic party with its premise that
"the blood of the Jew must serve as lubricating oil upon the wheels of the
Russian revolution."\(^\text{18}\)

The effect of Zionism, with its emphasis on an "exodus" from
Russia, would seem relevant to Knut. Zionism was one part of political

\(^\text{18}\) Dubnow, S., *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, KTAV Publishing House,
1975. p. 143
Jewish life in Russia during the early part of the Twentieth century which advocated a return to the Jewish homeland, then called Palestine. However full and equal rights for Jews in the Diaspora, that is, any area outside of Palestine, also became a part of the Zionist cause. The fight for full and equal rights by Jews in Russia was one which continued throughout the remainder of the Tsarist regime. Disadvantage to Jews in all sectors of life thus would have been a reality which Knut would have fully encountered during his impressionable formative years. Although Knut never officially called himself a Zionist, his actions, including his emigration to Israel, are Zionist in nature. This again, is yet another mystery surrounding the poet and his life.

For Dovid Knut in 1920, there was another vital issue - freedom from censorship. His poems had already begun to appear in the local press at that time, i.e. in 1917 for a period of about 6 months before the revolution, when restrictions against Jewish literary activity, including journalism, was relaxed. Knut's work appeared in the journal, Молодая мысль [Young Thought] and in the newspapers Бессарабский вестник [The Bessarabian Herald], Бессарабия [Bessarabia], Свободная Бессарабия [Free Bessarabia] and Свободная мысль [Free Thought]. Clearly such an experience of freedom was one which Knut would not relinquish easily. He therefore had to leave Bessarabia, since after its annexation by Romania, severe censorship returned. The same freedom which Knut experienced as a fledgling Jewish writer was one which he would continue to seek in his new

19 Unfortunately early copies of Knut's poetry were never published by him, even post-emigration, in his poetic oeuvre. His beginnings as editor and poet in Bessarabia, however, are noted by Khazan. p. 36.
"homelands" - first in France and later in Israel. This need for freedom of expression was almost certainly yet another reason that Knut chose to emigrate to France.

Why the Fiksmans settled on Paris as their goal for emigration is not known. It proved to be a fortuitous choice however, in the sense that Paris was to become the main center for the first wave of Russian emigration during the 1920's. (Berlin was the primary city of the Russian emigration in the early 1920's.) It is in Paris that Knut's career would take shape and flourish among contemporaries and notables such as Nina Berberova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Vladislav Khodasevich, and others.

We know nothing about how the family got money for the trip to France, but presumably the father would have sold his store and the family their belongings for the journey. Also, when Knut first arrived in Paris, besides writing, he worked in the family restaurant for a living. Clearly there were funds to establish a new existence.

By 1920, Knut was a young adult whose appearance had assumed its basic features. So how was his appearance perceived? The poet Nina Berberova seems to have perceived Knut as looking "Jewish". She describes him in the following manner: "Кнут был небольшого роста, с большим носом, грустными, но живыми глазами."

20 Although Knut died within six years of his arrival in Israel, presumably he would have begun to write again once he was comfortable with both the cultural and linguistic milieu.
22 Khazan, V., Dovid Knout: Collected Writings In Two Volumes, Volume 1, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997 p. 37
eyes.""] Indeed, Knut must have realized this perception of him, as his self-characterization in a letter written to a friend, demonstrates: "... я вовсе не крупный, серьезный, розовый блондин, каким Вы меня, по-видимому, воображаете — а легкий-телом, родом и мыслью — (читай <<легкомысленный>>), курчавый, чернавый (смуглый) местечковый еврей (1 м 65)." 23 [... I am not at all a small serious, rosy fair-haired man, as you apparently fancy me to be, but a curly-haired, darkish (dark-complexioned) small-town Jew (1 m. 65 cm tall), with a slight body type and an idea (read "frivolous").

From the time of his arrival, in 1920 until the time of his first published collection of poetry in emigration, on June 20, 1925, 24 the poet was quite active in literary circles. He was a member of numerous literary groups. One of these was Зеленая лампа 25 (The Green Lamp ). Another was Палата поэтов (The Chamber of Poets ), which Knut co-founded in 1922. Other groups included Гартапак (Gartapak) (formed in 1921), Через (Via ), Перекресток (Intersection) and the Союз Молодых Поэтов и Писателей в Париже (The Union of Young Poets and Writers in Paris ). As Rischin notes, it was with this last group that Knut published his first collection in emigration, Моих тысячелетий in 1925.

Knut apparently enjoyed founding and editing a variety of journals and newspapers, since he did so on a regular basis. Just as the young

---

24 ibid., p. 348.
25 This group was formed by Zinaida Gippius and her husband Dmitri Merezhkovsky in 1926 as "a literary and philosophical society." [V. Terras, Handbook of Russian Literature, Yale, 1985. p. 193]
Knut was editor of "Young Thought" ["Молодая мысль"] in 1918 in Russia, the Parisian Knut began another literary venture with fellow poets Nina Barberova and Iurii Terapiano. It was called "Новый дом" [The New Home] and it began publication in 1926.26

After the publication of Моях тысячелетий, Knut continued to be productive. In 1927, however, it nearly all ended for the poet after an incident that Iurii Terapiano describes in his 1970 essay27 on Knut:

"Он был сбит с ног автомобилем, получил сильное повреждение черепного покрова, пролежал месяц в больнице." (Terapiano: 1987, pp. 224-225)

"He was hit by a car, and received a severe injury of his cranial covering, and lay in a hospital for a month."

As the result of this head trauma, Knut received a monetary settlement which allowed him leave his job as a waiter and open a shop for the coloring of material.28

The year 1927 was also important in Knut's professional life, as it is the year when he took a public stand regarding the future of Russian literature. At a series of discussions of the "Green Lamp" group, Knut responded to the issue of "Russian Literature in Exile." Knut believed strongly, unlike the "older" generation of Russian émigré writers, like

---

26ibid., p. 38.
28 As Terapiano notes, "За этот <<аксиано>> ему выплатили большое вознаграждение, что дало ему возможность бросить службу и открыть ателье для раскраски материй." p.225

29
Gippius that, "когда всем будет ясно, что столица русской литературы не Москва, а Париж." 29

In spite of the accident, his poetic productivity continued to flourish all through the 1920's and 1930's. His writing includes the publication of four additional books of poetry after Моих тысячелетий: Вторая книга (The Second Book) in 1928, Сатир (The Satyr) in 1930,30 Парижские ночи (Paris Nights) in 1932 and Насущная любовь (Love's Sustenance) in 1938. During the first half of the 1930's, Knut participated in a number of public readings of his poetry, which increased his exposure and enhanced his reputation.

In 1935 Knut met his second wife-to-be, Ariadna Skriabina. She was to be a partner in the next phase of Knut's life, marked by his foundation of and participation in the Jewish resistance movement. Although little is known about the details of his first marriage, Gavriel Shapiro in his article, "Десять писем Довида Кнута" ["Ten Letter of Dovid Knut"], that Knut's first wife was Sarra (Sofia) Grobois, and that she died in the 1950's. He then mentions Skriabina as Knut's second wife, as being the daughter of composer Alexander Nikolaevich Skriabin's second marriage to Tatiana Fedorovna Shletser.31

30 Rischin, Ruth., Toward the Biography of a Period and a Poet: Letters of David Knout (1941-1949). Stanford Slavic Studies, Volume 4:2, Literature, Culture and Society in the Modern Age. In Honor of Joseph Frank. Part II. Stanford, 1992. p. 354 and p. 362. As Rischin notes, Knut lists this work as having a publication date of 1930, instead of the commonly noted 1929. There is no comment given regarding the difference in the two dates, or why 1929 was the commonly accepted date for this work.
31 Cahiersdu Monde Russe et Soviétique Vol. 27 (2), Avril-Juin, 1986 pp. 191-208. Shapiro's comments, on p. 192 and his footnote on p.194, indicate that he obtained his information regarding the first marriage of Knut, not through written sources, but rather through interviewing Noemi Ariel and later Eva Kirshner herself on May 29, 1985.
This lack of information about Knut's first wife is important, since the only scholar to mention this aspect of Knut's personal life is Shapiro. Even in Knut's *Collected Works*, there is no mention of Knut's first wife, only his son, Daniel. The first wife attributed to Knut by name in most scholarly texts is Skriabina, even though it is also acknowledged that she was, in fact, his second wife.

Ariadna Skriabina, who took the married name of Knut, was Jewish on her mother's side, according to most sources. To emphasize her Jewish heritage and commitment to it, she converted before marrying Knut and took the name "Sarra". She was to become a leading figure in the Jewish resistance movement, and in a sense, was even more devoted to the cause of preserving Jewry than her husband.

Although the couple met in 1935, they did not marry until March 30, 1940. Their blended family consisted of Skriabina's children, two

It should be noted that among the various sources I have checked, only Shapiro mentions Knut's first wife, or her name. All other sources commonly note only Knut's second marriage to Skriabina and then his third marriage after the end of the war. This omission on the part of other scholars, and indeed Knut himself, raises yet another mystery to be solved. No mention is made of the marriage itself, where and how Knut and his wife met, nor how Knut's son from the marriage, Daniel, was raised.

As the name change makes clear, Skriabina did convert. However, since her mother was Jewish, this conversion should not have been necessary. Judaism is matrilineal in nature, with any offspring born of Jewish mother are also considered to be Jews. Clearly there were other circumstances which warranted such a conversion, such as Skriabina's strong embrace of Zionism and her desire to publicly identify herself as being Jewish.

During the ceremony of conversion, the convert receives his or her new Jewish name. In the case of Ariadna, her Jewish name would have been Sarra bat Avraham v'Sarah: Sarra, daughter of Abraham and Sarah. As Abraham was the first convert, each new convert is considered the daughter or son of Abraham and Sarah.

One curiosity is that Ariadna was often called "Sara" by close friends and acquaintances of the couple, rather than Ariadna. I have found no evidence to explain why Ariadna used her Hebrew name as her name among friends, although clearly it evokes a stronger Jewish identity.

Although Khazan notes that the couple met not long after Knut's hospitalization in 1935, (see p. 41, *Dovid Knut: Collected Writings In Two Volumes, Volume 1*), Rischin notes that the couple may have met much earlier at the Montparnasse literary scene in Paris, in 1923, when Skriabina read her poetry at an evening for Boris Bozhnev. (Rischin, Ruth., "Toward the Biography of a Period and a Poet: Letters of David Knut (1941-
daughters from her first marriage and a son from her second marriage. Later, the couple would have a son, losi\textsuperscript{37}, born in 1943.\textsuperscript{38}

During the 1930's Knut's role began to evolve and change from that of a poet to that of an active journalist and founder of the Jewish Resistance movement. Just as Knut's poetry evoked Biblical images, the next step in Knut's life underscored his deep commitment to his fellow Jews, subjected to new pogroms - now on a universal scale (i.e. the Nazi persecution of the Jews).

In 1939, Knut began to publish \textit{L'Affirmation}, a French-Jewish newspaper whose circulation was disrupted by the outbreak of World War II. Soon Knut also became heavily involved with Jewish causes, specifically, the resistance movement in France. In a sense, the self-imposed alienation, which Knut exhibited with regard to his public embracing of Jewish themes in his poetry, was continued in his determined effort to create and lead the Jewish resistance movement in Toulouse. Knut had participated in the Twenty-first Zionist Congress in


\textsuperscript{37} Later on, losi Knut would write a memoir based on his brief recollection of his father, Dovid Knut, who died when losi was eleven. Losi also grew up to become a poet, just like his father, writing in Hebrew, the language of the land of Israel where he grew up. For examples of losi's poetry in Hebrew and in Russian translation, see Khazan, V., \textit{Dovid Knout: Collected Writings In Two Volumes, Volume 2}, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1998. pp. 673-684 and pp. 114-119, for the essay, "My Father and I" in Russian.

\textsuperscript{38} It should also be noted that the couple's son losi, was born just over a year before his mother was killed and while Knut was in seclusion in Switzerland. Khazan gives the son's date of birth as May 26, 1943 and Skriabina was killed on July 22, 1944. Whether Knut was present at his son's birth is unknown; however as he had left Toulouse for Switzerland to help the cause of Jewish resistance, it is unlikely.
Geneva, along with Skriabina and her friend, Eva Kirshner, in August, 1939.39

Another impetus for Knut’s increased involvement with pro-Judaic causes, including his attendance at Zionist Congress meetings and his eventual emigration to Israel, was provided by Ariadna, now Sarra Skriabina.40 Although Skriabina was very public in her Zionist support, it can be argued that both were Zionist in their leanings, despite the fact that Knut never publicly claimed to be a Zionist. His actions were very much in accord with Zionist sympathizers. The marriage was a key factor in Knut’s decision to immerse himself in resistance work, and Skriabina was deeply involved in the Resistance movement founded by him. She eventually fell victim to a Vichy-French execution.41

As a naturalized French citizen, Knut could have chosen simply to leave Vichy France altogether or at least to not play as large a role as he did during the war period, beginning in 1939. He could have continued to write and publish poetry, or he could have chosen to emigrate to the United States - as he did in fact consider for a time - or another country at the start of this period. As Ruth Rischin has shown in her 1992 article, Knut did, in 1941, write a letter to fellow émigré Mark Aldanov, who had already emigrated to the United States. In this letter he asked for help in

---

39 Khazan, V., Dovid Knout: Collected Writings In Two Volumes, Volume 1, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997 p. 42
40 During the course of their marriage, Skriabina has signed personal letters as “Ariadna Knut” and she is noted in references to the couple as being called “Sarra”. Clearly, Ariadna Skriabina was known by a number of different names during the time of her association with Knut. As a member of the Resistance, Ariadna was known by the code name Régine, as well.
41 Skriabina was shot and killed, along with another agent of the Jewish resistance, outside the family home, on the street by two members of the Vichy collaborationist French regime.
leaving France, with the intent of emigration to the United States. The appearance of this letter, dated June 3, 1941, raises a question regarding Knut's commitment to the resistance.

Why would a man who had invested so much of his personal and professional energies into the campaign of Jewish resistance suddenly wish to abandon this cause? A possible reason for Knut's letter to Aldanov would be that, as an intellectual, his professional activities were stifled by his complete engagement in the resistance effort. Perhaps he, momentarily, experienced fear. Knut was human, and having fear during the turmoil of the war is quite understandable. Since he was unable to emigrate, however, he continued his work with the resistance, which he began, in Toulouse.

Thus, whatever the reasons for his hesitations, he ultimately stayed with the movement he founded. He continued to champion the ideals embraced in his article, "Que Faire?" ("What Is to Be Done?") (1940), which came directly after his move to Toulouse and gave the reasons for his vigorous campaign for an active Jewish resistance. He reconfirmed these ideals in his work, Contribution à L'Histoire De La Résistance Juive En France 1940-1944, which details the history of the Jewish resistance movement founded by Knut and supported by Skriabina who worked as an intelligence agent in it under the code name "Régine". The couple's marriage was ended prematurely when

43 It should be noted that in the book, Ariadna is referred to by her intelligence code name of "Régine", and Knut never refers to himself directly, although it is clear that he is not only the author, but the founder of the Toulouse section of the Jewish Resistance.
Skriabina was shot and killed on July 22, 1944, outside the family home by French collaborationist police, as a direct result of her intelligence gathering activities for the Jewish Resistance during World War II.

Although Knut wrote Contribution à L'Histoire De La Résistance Juive En France 1940-1944, he did not refer to himself or Skriabina by their actual names. In fact, he wrote the book in third person, in referencing himself. Knut's work, and thus its acceptance as a valid historical representation of the poet's involvement in the war as a resistance leader, is noted in Adam Rayski's Le choix des juifs sous Vichy: entre soumission et résistance [p.301-302], in Leon Poliakov's article, in the Yad Vashem book, Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust, entitled, "Jewish Resistance in the West" [pp. 286, 288], and numerous times in Lucien Lazare's La résistance juive en France. Knut is seen most notably in David Weinbeg's Les Juifs à Paris de 1933 à 1939. In two footnotes, notes:

"Les positions d'Affirmation étaient toujours celles de son infatigable directeur, David Knout. Étudiant russe installé à Paris, et qui n'avait que des contacts très superficiels avec la vie juive, Knout fut attiré dans les années trente par le sionisme révisionniste.... Il prit une part active à la résistance juive pendant

---

la Seconde Guerre mondiale, et s'installa après la guerre en Israël, où il mourut en 1955. " p. 241

It should be noted that Judaism emphasizes, among many other virtues, "tzedakah" or "righteousness". For many Jews in France and elsewhere, this meant taking action to save Jews and to preserve Jewish religious practices. Knut's courageous readiness to remain in France should be seen as an attempt to preserve not only his own life and that of his family, but also as a commitment to save Jews living in France. He ultimately decided to help save those threatened by the German occupation, however much it cost him personally in terms of his diminished creativity. His continued concern for the greater welfare of others, beyond his family, is again demonstrated when, at a later point, during the war, Knut fled to Switzerland. 46 Although this action would seem to indicate that he had abandoned his family, in actuality, Knut's action saved other members of the Toulouse branch of the Jewish resistance. As a Jewish resistance leader, Knut was well-known and therefore targeted by the collaborationist French regime. His absence allowed the Toulouse Jewish resistance movement members to move about more freely and to continue the fight against the collaborationist regime. 47

Like the poet in "Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир," from his 1925 collection, Knut assumes the burden of his Jewish heritage with his

---

46 Knut fled to Switzerland in May, 1944 and remained until late October, 1944.
47 ibid. p. 355. Also, Khazan, p. 43 notes that Knut fled to Switzerland where he remained until the liberation of France, while Skriabina remained in Toulouse.
proactive stance during World War II. Instead of waiting for help from the French government, Knut became an activist, gathering and joining with other Jews to fight in the Jewish Resistance.

Each part of Knut's life was a time marked by great turbulence for Jews. There was the Kishinev Massacre, other numerous pogroms, the unequal status and treatment of Jews and the constant uncertainty as to whether being a Jew in Russia would ever be acknowledged. This period was followed by new disasters during the occupation of France as Nazi extermination eliminated millions of Jews. These events brought out the activist in Knut.

It is not by accident that Knut's poetic oeuvre effectively ceases its existence in 1938. For Knut to remain a poet and to write as he had before would have meant clinging to a non-viable émigré past and forsaking a part of his future destiny - the "homecoming." By the end of the war - his wife dead, his life in France devastated - he resolved more firmly than ever to emigrate to his final destination: Israel. His determination to leave the past behind is emphasized in his final two original publications from this post-World War II period: two non-fiction books published in 1946 and 1947. He had, in 1949, issued a volume of collected works. Although Knut published a final volume of collected works in 1949, it is a compilation of various poems from previously published works.


These books were written in French. Knut wrote the introduction to the first one and the second was entirely his own work. It should be noted that Knut wrote in French only for his articles in French newspapers, his non-fiction works published in France and the occasional personal letter. The majority of his literary output was in Russian, i.e. all of his

37
collection of already published poetry, Избраные стихи, putting in minor revisions only.

At some point after the war and before December, 1947, Knut married again, this time to Virginie Sharovskaia, a French-Russian actress. She was in a theatrical troupe which performed a play, Tel-Khai by Max Zweig, which Knut translated and adapted for the French stage. It was with Virginie that Knut ended his stay in France and finally emigrated to Israel.

This emigration did not occur in one phase. There had been several trips to Palestine before World War II, and these clearly aroused his interest. In addition, there was a journey the couple took in 1948 for the autumn season to Israel. The final move occurred in September, 1949. As Khazan notes, the couple quickly were granted Israeli citizenship on October 4, 1949 and like many pioneering Jews of this period, the Knuts lived on a kibbutz, "Afikim", starting on November 27, 1949 for six months. Subsequently, Knut and his family moved to an ulpan, where they learned Hebrew. The couple finally settled in a

---

poetry, and his prose works, including his sketches of his Russian émigré contemporaries).


52 Khazan, V., Dovid Knout: Collected Writings In Two Volumes, Volume 1, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997 p. 46

53 ibid., p. 46. As Khazan notes, Knut and his wife moved to the ulpan six months after settling at the Afikim kibbutz. This was not unusual for the time, and even today it would not be unusual for new immigrants to join an ulpan. An ulpan is a type of learning environment where Hebrew is taught and spoken. The ultimate goal of the ulpan is to quickly accclimate newcomers to Israel, both in the usage of Hebrew on a regular basis and in an understanding of Israeli life and culture. For many during this early time of Israel's status as a newly formed country, the primary goals of kibbutzim and ulpanim were to build a stronger Israel. It was not uncommon for ulpanim and kibbutzim members to plant trees,
place not far from Tel-Aviv, Giv'ataime, which was populated with fellow survivors of World War II and the Holocaust from eastern Europe.  

Whether the couple had children or not is unclear. We do know however, that Knut’s son from his marriage to Skriabina and her three children were with him in Israel. Knut did return to Paris once more, a year before his death, but by the end of that year, 1954, he was very ill and back home in Israel in a hospital. The man who had been so prolific a poet and writer since 1914 was now having trouble writing and had become very weak, as a result of his illness, diagnosed as either cancer or a brain tumor. Iurii Terapiano, in his 1970 essay on Knut, also mentions another possible reason for his untimely death. As already mentioned, in 1927, Knut had sustained a head trauma after he was knocked down by a car. Knut had been in the hospital for a month. Terapiano clearly believed that the head trauma which Knut sustained at the time of the accident played a pivotal role in the poet’s eventual death in 1955. In his 1970 essay, he notes:

"Умер он в начале 1955 года от мучительной опухоли в мозгу, по всей вероятности вызванной той самой автомобильной катастрофой." [Terapiano: 1987, p. 225]

---

a practice still common to this day, work the land and “build” Israel. The traditional length of stay in a n ulpan is three months.

55ibid. p. 46  
56There is no evidence that Knut’s third and final marriage produced children either in Khazan or in Rishcin’s notes. Various references to the final period of Knut’s life do not mention children born to Virginie and Dovid Knut.

57  
58Temira Pachmuss states in her article in Terras’ Handbook of Russian Literature, p. 229, that Knut died of cancer, however she does not specify the type.

59Rischin initially states in her article (p.349), that Knut died of a brain tumor. Rischin also stated in a conversation with the author in February, 1995, that the poet died of a brain aneurysm.
"He died early on in 1955 from an agonizing brain tumor, in all probability caused by that same automobile catastrophe."

Dovid Knut, born David Mironovich Fiksman, died on February 15, 1955. Following traditional Jewish customs, he was buried within 24 hours, on February 16, 1955. He died in agonizing pain, yet was aware that he would be buried on Jewish soil, and according to Jewish tradition, in the land whose existence he had cherished for so long. This was a poet and writer who was born to the agony of inequality for Jews in the Pale of Settlement in Russia, who endured World War II and made a difference, primarily through his poetry’s universal themes, and secondly, through his formation of the Jewish resistance, and who finally died in the Promised Land.

Knut never wrote in Hebrew for publication. Perhaps that would have been his next step. It is clear that at the time of his death, he did speak Hebrew. Given Knut’s past history of being active in literary circles and as a journalist he would most certainly have continued to write and might well have attempted Hebrew, at least, in prose. This, however, remains speculation. What we know is that he wrote his poetry in Russian all his life. His prose, poetry, and personal essays were written in Russian, while his articles and non-fiction works written in French and published in French journals and newspapers.

There is much that remains a mystery regarding Knut’s life and personality, especially for the period during World War II and the period immediately preceding his emigration to France in 1920. It is from his poetry, however, that the real essence of Knut can be gleaned - the Knut
who was a biblical imagist, a philosopher who took the spiritual and made it mundane and vice-versa - took the mundane and made it spiritual through the use of universal themes. The following chapter begins this deeper exploration of Dovid Knuf's poetic oeuvre through an introduction to his recurrent imagery and dialogue with God.
CHAPTER 2

IMAGERY IN KNUT'S POETIC OEUVRE: AN INTRODUCTION

As many riddles as there still are in regard to Knut's life, as many blank spaces are there to be found in literary criticism of Knut's oeuvre. The few who have examined Knut's poetry include American scholars Gleb Struve, Evelyn Bristol, Temira Pachmuss and Latvian scholar Fyodor Fyodorov. With the exception of Fyodorov who chose to examine Knut's biblical motifs in a short article, all of these works are basically summaries and surveys, part of histories or handbooks as they are. Another genre in which Knut occasionally makes an appearance is the memoir. Russian émigrés Iurii Terapiano, Irina Odoevtseva, and André Sedykh include him in their memoirs, as does Knut and Ariadna Skriabina's friend Eva Kirshner. Knut's son with Ariadna Skriabina Knut, losi, also recounts his memories of his father in the essay, "Мой отец и я" ["My Father and I"]. Other recollections, to my knowledge, have not appeared. While, memoirs are obviously not interpretations or critical studies, it is worth noting that little is mentioned in these memoirs about Knut's work as a poet.

---

1 For losi Knut's essay, along with some of his poems in both Hebrew and Russian, see OW, Volume 2.
2 In addition to these resources, there are four small articles which focus on Knut's use of a pseudonym and the lure of Israel.
As a result of all these factors, Knut researchers have vast tasks ahead of them. His biographers will have to wait for, or find, additional information and seek contact with those who knew the poet when he was alive. Students of Knut's poetics are in a better position than his biographers, of course, since the poet's texts are easily available. In this survey chapter I cannot address the intricacies of a thorough poetic analysis. My dissertation, which concentrates on the translation of the poetic texts, only allows for a summary introduction to Knut's oeuvre. For this purpose I have had recourse to the few memoirs that exist, as well as the brief references in handbooks and histories. Last, but not least, I draw on Fyodorov's article, with which I largely agree.

The available literature has noted the prevalence of Biblical images in Knut's poetry. Typical of the characterizations is Bristol's statement that Knut's oeuvre is "divided between Old Testament Stories and the Paris that is symbolized by the Seine." [p.296] The brief note about Knut in Victor Terras' A History of Russian Literature, states that "unlike other Russian poets of Jewish parentage, [Knut] actively stressed his Jewishness, concentrated on Jewish themes, and drew on the Old Testament for his imagery." [p.534]

In my view, this statement needs elaboration. Knut's poetic oeuvre involves more than just stories from the Old Testament and the nostalgia for Russia typical of Parisian émigré life. For one thing, the biblical and Parisian images are linked by a third major thematic strain: the quest for erotic fulfillment. This linkage is already very marked in Of My Millennia (1925), where one important sub-text is the Biblical "Song of Songs", with
its lofty-erotic imagery. In this collection of poems, the erotic theme symbolizes the bond between the "Jew" and his Promised Land, Canaan, as the image of the Beloved and the Land merge. I give some examples of this merger below. In addition, there is a theme that perhaps is even more important than any of the others, more important than the Promised Land and the beauty of the Beloved, since it includes them all. It is the poet's calling, which is proof of both God's existence and the means by which to celebrate Woman as the essence of nature. In the end, poetry in fact becomes equated with prayer and glorification of God.

Let us now turn to Of My Millennia. It is divided into two sections. One of these is set in Bessarabia, the other "on the banks of the Seine," to quote the title of Irina Odoevtseva's memoirs. The collection consists of nineteen poems in all, twelve in part One and seven in part Two. Although biblical, erotic and artistic images blend in all the poems, a certain predominance of one or the other can be noted in individual poems. Thus, two poems predominantly deal with biblical images (all in part One), four address delight in sensual experience in a manner reminiscent of "The Song of Songs" (all in part One), whereas one poem deals with its opposite, namely sexual depravity (in part Two). Three poems celebrate nature and the sense of being intensely alive in exuberant imagery (all are found in part One). Four poems - often the longer ones - address man's direct relationship with God (one in part

---

3 While there are conflicting opinions on the status of the land of Canaan as being pagan or biblical in nature, I take the position that since the land of Canaan is specifically referenced as being the "Promised Land" in the bible, that its role in Knut's poetry is clearly "biblical" and not "pagan". Being a Jewish both in his personal life and expressing Jewish religious elements in his poetry supports this theory that Knut's poetic oeuvre manifests biblical themes at its heart, and more importantly, an emphasis on the relationship with God and sensual elements.
One and three in part Two. Of the remaining five - two are found in part One, the remaining three in part Two - all can be seen as addressing the specifics of the "Poet" and his relation to his craft and calling, or else his situation of being an exile in an alien environment. As already stated, these divisions are artificial since all are interwoven in each poem. Still, this division is made in order to demonstrate certain thematic developments and the thematic movement within each collection.

One observation in this regard that can be made on the basis of the "numbers" given above is this: part One celebrates the lost land of Biblical harmony. In the ideal landscapes conjured up, man and woman and nature interact in spontaneity and beauty. The landscape and the Beloved are virtually one as "she" lies down as "a red desert" and her gaze "rises like the black sun rises, Between the breasts of hills" (poem II). In Paris, the symbol of sterile civilization, love is demeaned to public sex purchased for "20 or 30 French sous" (poem XV). In the biblical landscape God's presence is felt as is that of "millennia" of Jewish (and even pre-Jewish) history (and pre-history). Here in the sacred desert, the poet merges with David, "remembering" how he "as a lad sang to irate Saul"(I). Here we can visualize how Moses descended from Mount Sinai. We even see "the stern gaze of the Most High - Adonai" (I), how it peers down at the "petty creatures convulsing in the sand."

Interestingly, the landscape of part One is not entirely "Biblical."

Following modernistic collage techniques, Knut blends the biblical landscape with another southern one: the Bessarabian realm of his childhood. Both are presented as largely harmonious, blissfully
sensuous, and mutually enriched by each other. Thus biblical figures are not "disturbed" by gypsies right out of Pushkin's poetry (The Gypsies, ыгыны, 1828) and biblical goat-cheese and Romanian goat-cheese happily co-exist.

Paris, by contrast, is the realm of civilization, loneliness and isolation. The hot desert sand has here been replaced with a "huge white field" and an all-dissolving fog "where the human eye is lackluster/Where they wear their hearts like a hernia" (XIII). It is here however that the poet discovers two important compensations for lost sensuality and joy of existence: the fulfillment that writing poetry and communication (rebellious or submissive) with God gives. Thus a "leaden evening" on the banks of the Seine at first causes immense sadness in the poet, but this mood is replaced by sheer delight at the thought that the poet soon will be at home where he will be able to write poetry:

Homeward, to my verses! Is my evening not filled with verse? Rachel! (XV)

In the collection Of My Millennia, the introductory poem is especially important. The collection's title is explained in the introductory poem, "Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир" when the poet states that he is the recipient of all his people's millennia - their historical, cultural and religious heritage. Knut takes what is considered most sacred by a large portion of mankind, namely religious tales from the Bible and made them part of a "lived life." Familiar biblical texts, such as the stories of
Abraham and Sarah, Adam and Eve or Noah and the great flood, for example, are "re-lived" rather than presented. Knut also takes the profane and ordinary activities of life, such as a lake or an ordinary bridge and makes them into something "sacred", a spiritual link to a higher power. He explores the essence of human nature through his poetic dialogues with God, with the reader and with himself.

As the reader progresses through Knut's poetic œuvre, it becomes evident that spiritual and philosophical questions which have aroused man's curiosity for ages form the central core of Knut's work. This observation belies the widespread notion that Knut was a poet of "Jewish themes," for in spite of his Biblical images and motifs, Knut is a universal poet, as well as a "Jewish" one. Questions such as "who am I?" or "Is earthly love an impediment to love for God?"; "What is Man's relationship to God?"; and "What is Man's responsibility for his own life" are constantly raised. Knut addresses these and other philosophical and spiritual issues in an indirect manner, usually through the repetition, of symbolic key words such as "sand," "desert," "love," and "wife," for example. He uses allusion techniques and recurring patterns: the first poems in a cycle are usually a mixture of the ordinary and the biblical, with a heavier emphasis on the mundane. These introductory poems are often shorter, usually composed of four-line stanzas. Subsequent poems in a given cycle tend toward the religious-philosophical level and the mundane element diminishes. They are often longer. Of My Millennia clearly follows this pattern. In this work, the final poem, "Apotheosis", is a
quiet philosophical celebration of the poet's preparation for his role as a mouthpiece for God. Here, in silence, the poet admonishes himself:

"Keep silent./Close your obscene lips./The red-hot seal will be imprinted/Upon the tongue, coarse and crude, unsuited for its task." In addition, the poet symbolizes his readiness by saying, "My ears will rise up obediently/To listen:" (XIX)

The poem, "Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир" also presents the poet in his one invariant role, wherever he may be - as wanderer, traveler and exile. It is as a traveler in time that he was able to become a repository of thousands of years of Jewish experience. This enables him to know both the verdant fields of twentieth-century Bessarabia and the Biblical court of Saul. This traveler also knows his ultimate duty: to record the experience of his people's "millennia" in his poetry.

Because the poem, "Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир", not only begins the collection, but is Knut's "signature piece," I would like to dwell on this poem somewhat more in detail than I will do with others. It is a "manifesto poem" and understanding it is essential to understanding the entirety of Knut's poetic oeuvre. It begins with a poetic statement of intent, an introduction of the poet and his past. Knut introduces himself, in a manner reflecting his Jewish heritage:

"Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир,
Сын Меира — Кто — Просвещает—Тьмы"
"I, Dovid-Ari ben Meir,
Son of Meir-who-enlightens the [dark] multitudes"
This type of introduction has a clear reference to the Jewish religious tradition. It is customary for a Jewish male or female to be addressed by their Hebrew name and the words bar(ben) or bat. This particle indicates parentage and it is followed by the names of the parents. One is "bar"/"ben," or "son of," or "bat," "daughter of," one's parents. This type of formal naming is used during Jewish religious services, when a person is called forth to participate in the service itself: to read Torah portions, to say prayers, etc. It can also be seen in the Bible itself, where the identification of individuals often includes the naming of a person's genealogical ancestry. A well-known example occurs in the Old Testament Book of Ruth, at the end, where Boaz's descendants are listed, including King David, a poet that Dovid Knut clearly identified with. By inference, the narrator-poet clearly believes he is on a mission. This can be seen in the final two lines of the poem where poetry is seen as the means by which to accomplish the mission.

In this introductory poem, the reader is told of the land of Knut's childhood, Bessarabia, which is overflowing with images of wealth and happiness, "flowing with milk and honey," in fact. This Russian (Rumanian) land is permeated with "memories" of his Jewish heritage, however. In it we find the biblical past of the Jewish people. Knut uses the kind of collage principle that has already been mentioned. By repeating the lines, "I remember everything" in stanzas three and six,

---

4 References to this Jewish religious tradition are also made in Khazan, V. Dovid Knut Sobranie Sochinenij Volume 1, Jerusalem, 1997. p. 310.
5 In Biblical terms, the naming is is traditionally listed as the father, who begot the son, who begot the grandson, etc. In Ruth 4: 18-21, King David's ancestors are listed from the line of Perez: Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram, Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nashon, Nashon begot Salmon, Salmon begot Boaz, Boaz begot Obed, Obed begot Jesse and Jesse begot David.
Knut emphasizes his continued visitation of the biblical past. This repetition strengthens the framework of the poem by emphasizing the role of the narrator-poet as a traveler through space and time. He is the carrier of the collective memory of the Jewish people.

The poem, "Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир," consists of seven stanzas. Seven is a number that is frequently mentioned in a spiritual or religious context. Examples include the fact that God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Exodus 23:10-12 states that one should work the fields for six years and let them lie fallow in the seventh year. Likewise, one should be working six days and rest on the seventh. The seventh stanza in the poem under discussion stands out by a sudden shift in time. The poet returns from his "memories" of the millennia he has lived through, to the present. It does seem then that the fact that the number of stanzas is seven here is not coincidental, since the seventh stanza, like the sabbath or the fallow year, is set apart from the preceding six units by a qualitative shift.

The fourth stanza highlights the Jewish poet's acquaintance with the biblical past of his people. The images drawn by the poet, in this stanza, are those of ancient times: the desert wastes of Canaan, the cedars of Lebanon, and the ancient walls of Sacred Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that Canaan, the first location mentioned in this stanza was the initial homeland of the people of Israel. Canaan, which is first mentioned in Genesis 12:4-9, is the land that God promised Abram [or Abraham], the promised land of the people of Israel. Jerusalem, which is mentioned as the last word of the stanza, is considered the final home of
the people of Israel. Thus the poet includes origins and finality in his vision, the totality of time.

The fifth stanza is the only one of the seven stanzas which does not start with the personal pronoun "I." It deals with God's wrath with the people of Israel, during the time when Jews were celebrating the Golden Calf while their religious leader, Moses, was receiving the ten commandments of Judaic religious law on Mount Sinai. This omission is important since it indicates that the poet can view events even from "God's perspective."

With the sixth stanza, the poet's remembrance leaps from Biblical times back to the twentieth century in which he (currently) lives and to Moldavia. Here we see the collage and merger principles clearly practiced. The creak of the wagon spoken of there could equally well be that of a Jewish vehicle in biblical times as one of current gypsy origins. The poet loves the "wanderers" of all times.

The seventh and last stanza begins as the first, with the use of the personal pronoun "I" in the traditional form of Jewish naming or identification. The "Dovid-Ari" of this stanza is compared to a wine that has been fermenting for thousands of years and to a traveler who is stopping to share a simple tale with his brethren. This tale is the history of Judaism, of what the poet calls the "blessed burden of my millennia" - "Блаженный груз моих тысячелетий."

---

6 Jerusalem was the location of the Second Temple, whose remnants (primarily the outer gate of the Western Wall, known as the wailing wall) are considered sacred to Jews. There is the belief in Judaism that the temple, which was destroyed in the year 70 C.E., will be rebuilt in Jerusalem, hence its consideration as a "sacred" city.

7 Exodus, Chapters 19-31 details Moses' sojourn on Mount Sinai with God, when Moses received the Ten Commandments and the basics of Jewish Law.
It is also important to note Knut's extensive use of an archaic and obsolete vocabulary as well as his use of words relating to food items. The use of archaic or obsolete words clearly reinforces the setting of the biblical past, which is created in this poem. At the same time, this stylistic layer evokes Pushkin's famous poem, "The Prophet" ("Пророк," 1828) which uses the same layer extensively. The food images contribute to the contreteness of the setting - the poet conveys the feeling that he really has lived in the past (and present) that he describes.

Russian literature, Bessarabian landscapes, Biblical tradition - all blend into a rich texture. The poet's heritages interweave word-images which are repeated as well. One of these is the image of desert wastes and sand. The sand image usage is a subtle underlying rhythm throughout not just "Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир," but the entire collection of Of My Millennia. In "Я, Довид-Ари бен Меир," it is associated both with the biblical past, as well as the timelessness of the tale the poet recounts in this collection of poems.

It is interesting to note that Knut the poet, who knew alienation, exile and non-assimilation in his personal life, also chose as the primary

---

8 An example would be Knut's use, in the third stanza, of the feminine noun, "песнь." This noun has two meanings. The first is an obsolete meaning for "song." The second meaning is a literary one - "canto" or "book." The modern word for "song" is "песня," not "песнь." Knut's choice in this case of the noun "песнь" not only serves to create an image of an ancient time, it also is appropriate because the term, "Песнь песней" is the phrase used for the Biblical book of love, the Song of Solomon or Song of Songs. This noun has the biblical connection therefore, which the noun "песня", does not.

9 Another tool that Knut uses to evoke images of lush, fertile biblical (and twentieth-century) lands is food. The poet conveys the abundance of both biblical and twentieth-century times through the poet's recounting of certain food items in the krai, his homeland. Among them are polenta, sheep's milk cheese, and reddish maize (in the first stanza). In the sixth, the poet recalls a quince-tree, halva (a Middle Eastern sweet dessert made from ground nuts and caramel which is still a popular Jewish desert to this day) and garlic.

52
biblical image, a Jewish king (David) who was the descendant of a non-assimilationist, a convert to Judaism, and an exile by choice. I have in mind David's ancestral line from Ruth (in the Book of Ruth). Judaism has historically welcomed the convert, the stranger. King David's ancestor, Ruth, whose importance warranted a separate book in the Bible, was a "ger", or, a stranger, who - in spite of this - became "the matriarch of Jewish royalty".\(^\text{10}\) Ruth willingly chose exile from her homeland, her family, and her religion, to embrace Judaism. This devotion and loyalty, this willingness to leave one's former faith to embrace Judaism, is a tradition in Jewish history dating back to Abraham.\(^\text{11}\) Likewise, Ruth's descendant, David, leaves his childhood home for the court of Saul and during his lifetime must leave his "home" within Israel several times. Thus, the notion of a self-imposed exile, an alienation from the familiar, is inherent in Dovid Knut's Jewish heritage, namely in the Biblical texts and tales with which he would have been familiar as a child. The narrator-poet in Я Довид-Ари бен Мейя, therefore, is reflecting a common trend in the history of the Jewish people and one which Dovid Knut himself would continue to follow, both in his poetry and in his personal life of self-imposed exile. Having examined the first poem of this collection as a prologue, not just to the collection Of My Millennia, but to the entire subsequent œuvre, it is apparent that Dovid Knut combines deep loyalty to a specifically Jewish-Biblical tradition with a universality which in no way is diminished by cultural

\(^{10}\)Kristeva, Julia, Strangers to Ourselves, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 70

\(^{11}\)Genesis 12:1-4 notes how God told Abraham to leave his native land to go to the land he would show him. Abraham went on faith. Ruth did the same.
specificity. The "millennia" of Jewish history prove to deal with issues that are of eternal validity and concern all mankind. I now proceed to a discussion of Second Book.

This collection consists of thirty-one poems. Once more we have two sections with twelve in the first and nineteen in the second. Overall, the poems tend to be longer in this collection and, above all, very much more abstract. Nevertheless, there is a "narrative" that can be seen in these poems. The first section introduces a note of protest against God. The protest is the traditional and universal one of "God being unjust to his creatures" - the complaint of Job in the book of Job. Why, for example, do death and its terror exist? Why is poor earth filled with suffering and sadness? The poet registers some comforts, however, such as those of poetry and music:

And when I gaily withstand
Despair and decay-
It is the surf of the universe that beats in my heart
My powerful music. (II)

Yet it is "pity" for earth that prevails in this collection. Thus, in one poem (III), the poet is taken to the "radiant heaven of the silvery blue void," but the "stars burning like dawn," in a Eseninesque vein, do not extinguish the memory of "apple trees - nor even! --/ A crooked street lamp in the city." The second section "sings" of love as delight and as hindrance to reach God. Poetry is seen as superior to love. Love must be "resisted" for "greater labors" which include the "struggle with a lump of verbal ore" (XXII).
Not separated into a special section, yet clearly beginning a different phase of the collection, is the section that begins with Noah’s journey in the ark. Here Noah in fact does not return to earth, but sails to God’s kingdom. Here he is welcomed as a son, since he has fulfilled the bidding of his Father. Ultimately a parallel is drawn between Noah and the poet. Like Noah, the poet withstands temptation and obeys the Lord. Yet, love is also shown to be a positive force in earthly life, as is faithfulness to the history of one’s people. How is this contradiction resolved? It seems to me that, in the end, Noah earns the lesson God wanted him to know. This lesson is that it is good to enjoy earthly joys while being on earth but that it is even better to follow the summons of the Lord when the time comes to listen for it. In other words there is, “a season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven, “as Ecclesiastes tells us - there is a time for being born and a time for dying,” and a there is a time to turn to God and His demands.

_Satyr_ consists of only six poems - an "Introduction" ("Вступление") and the main body. As the title of the collection intimates, there are both satiric and hedonistic strata in the small collection. The satire is aimed at a sterile world and an urban milieu where "maleness" is threatened even if not (yet) extinct. It is degraded, however. Nostalgically, the poet reconstructs an Edenic setting in which he makes Adam behave very much like a satyr who does not care for "philosophizing" but happily "jumped on the mare" (III). The modern male, however, is confined to the metro train for his sexual adventures. There anonymous bodies pressing against him cause "the flow of seed"
IV. As the Latvian critic Fyodorov points out, these satires on modern civilization evoke V. Khodasevich's collection of poetry "Europe" (p. 182), where sexuality likewise has lost all its sensuality and been degraded to perversity. Khodasevich does not balance his satire on Europe (the "West") with a yearning for the past, but Knut does:

Where are the games and diversions of our forefathers,  
Their hunting for impassioned women...  
Then the oak forest often saw  
How the prey itself went looking for trouble. (V)

To his regret, the poet and his male fellow sufferers cannot hunt for "impassioned women"; they can do nothing more than pick up a handkerchief, dropped on purpose (V).

Thus this small collection, or rather cycle, forms a counterpoint to the preceding Second Book. Whereas there, poetry and obedience to God were seen as ultimately superior values to erotic love, or where at any rate, a balance was struck, Satyr exalts "pagan" passions. God makes no appearance in this little cycle, since we either move in a pagan world ruled by Pan and his satyrs or in an urban world where God has been lost. Certainly the harmony between man, woman and nature of the collection Of My Millennia has been lost. Of course, it should be remembered that we deal with satiric poetry, i.e. poetry that exaggerates and distorts. The grotesque sexuality of the city calls forth a "sound, pagan" response.

The theme of the urban Parisian milieu as the symbolic setting of contemporary civilization is continued in Parisian Nights. Divided into two sections, this collection consists of twenty poems - - eighteen in part
One and two (longish ones) in part Two. It is thus possible to speak of a main body of poems and an epilogue. Continued here is the theme of the poet's calling - this time not in a Biblical milieu, but in a "Parisian" one. It proves that Paris - unlike the Biblical lands - is a true desert, i.e. a realm of total spiritual sterility. The poet's calling is the only "oasis" in this emptiness of urban modernity:

On the fertile layer, on the sheet of paper
I fling ink seeds.
The light of the lamp, bashful and having a sense of importance, warms them,
And the night and stillness are fertilizing them. (I)

In Parisian Nights, the poet is an exile in an alien environment whose main company is his memory and the images of the past it is able to conjure up. This collection is one the saddest in Knut's entire oeuvre. Even love is presented in a nostalgic rather than sensual or grotesque tonality. The poet is happy just to kiss the Beloved's "thin hand" (II). He has nothing to offer her except weariness and "deaf-mute" days.

At home weariness awaits me
And the staircase is becoming steeper every day

This is clearly not the "pagan" satyr ready to "mount" the next available female at the drop of a hat. The poverty of exile is the only "gift" the poet can offer his Beloved - who well may be a memory rather than a presence:

My friend, what can I give you- in my poverty...
My only friend, oh, how sad is this:
The two of us cannot even be silent together. (II)
As in the collection *Of My Millennia*, a repeated word-image is used, in this case "snow". The urban milieu of the poet lacks the heat of the desert - its season is the cold of winter. Earth is covered in snow, but it is not Blok's Russian winter that is evoked in Knut's Paris, as the very allusions to Blok's "Earth in Snow" emphasize. Here there are no dizzying sleigh rides above "the abyss leading to eternity" (Blok) - rather just the registering of dull time passing "like mist among branches stiffening in the cold" (XII). As usual, poetry, and art in general, can give some meaning to existence even in this "desert" and therefore the snow can become a source of joy and purity also:

Snow of gladness and snow of sorrow,
Snow of wisdom and snow of purity, (XII)

Remarkable are the many Blokian reminiscences in this section of *Parisian Nights* from "Earth in Snow" (1908) to the cycle "Dances of Death." These allusions seem to be used to bring out that even though Blok too was a poet of disharmony who did not feel at home in the modern world, he nevertheless did have one. He was living in Russia and its snows were *his* snows. Knut does not have this privilege. The Parisian snow is not "his." However, like all poets, he is comforted by the Muse and the memory of the poetry of the past inspired by other Muses, Blok's, for example.

These Blokian reminiscences create the transition toward the "Epilogue." The first of its last two (long) poems introduces the theme of
memory as a duty. Dovid-Ari ben Meir stated that his destiny was to carry the blessed burden of his people's millennia. This duty has not ceased in Paris and it is the recollection of this duty that reintroduces the theme of the "history of the Jewish people." It is interesting to note that here, in Parisian Nights, the poet does not evoke a Biblical landscape or a Bessarabian pastoral, but the Kishinev of "pogrom" times. What he remembers in "Я помню тусккий кишиневский вечер" ("I remember a dull evening in Kishinev") (XIX) is not a "poetic" Jewish life, but a drab one, presented in almost "naturalistic" terms. It is not that he describes a pogrom - he describes the funeral of a "dead Jew" who died under normal circumstances, but the impression is evoked that the funeral of this old "lean man" represents the anguish of living and dying in "exile" in general and "Jewish exile" in particular:

За стариками, несшими носилки,  
Шла кучка мане-кацовых евреев,  
Зеленовато-желтых и глазастых.  
От их заплесневелых лапсердаков  
Шел сложный запах святости и рока,  
Еврейский запах — нищеты и пота,  
Селедки, моли, жареного лука,  
Священных книг, пеленок, синагоги. (XIX)

Behind the old men, who carried the litter,  
Went a small group of big-eyed,  
Greenish-yellow, Mane-Katz Jews.  
From their moldy long overcoats  
Exuded a mixture of holiness and fate.  
A Jewish smell - of destitution and sweat,  
of herring, moths, and roasted onions,  
Of sacred books, of diapers and the synagogue. (XIX)
Contrasted to this evocation of poverty and "hopeless" exile, is - again - the theme of art. The drab landscape presented here is redeemed by the fact that "Pushkin once lived there" and looked at the place with his "fiery Arab eyes." The scene is redeemed by the fact that a woman's "high voice" transforms the paltry funeral into a religious and aesthetic event. The poet's final statement is therefore that "blessed" is the man who ever breathed the "specific, Jewish-Russian air" of diaspora. The last poem of the collection reconfirms the poet's recommitment to "memory" and "witnessing" and "carrying" the millennia of history.

The final collection, *Love's Sustenance*, consists of thirty poems and it is again divided - this time into a "prologue" (one poem) and two parts. Thirteen poems form part One and sixteen poems are found in part Two. The prologue poem addresses the theme of the title - love. It speaks of man's yearning for love, of the physical satiation of the yearning and the ultimate impossibility to satisfy the spiritual yearning hidden beneath the physical one. The poet states that all who live yearn for love and its fulfillment, to the point of giving everything for just a "crumb of bread and a stale, urgent love" -- only to find that fulfillment is unrealizable. (I) Love is more than a "crumb of bread".

The poems in part One continue the patterns set by Knut in *Second Book*, *Satyr*, and *Parisian Nights*, thematically and image-wise. Unlike the previous works, however, the majority of the poems in *Love's Sustenance* are named. They have titles such as "Poverty," "Autumnal Port," "Rain" and "Contradictions." As these titles indicate, harmony has not been reached, alienation has not ceased. A dreary urban milieu - the
poor quarters of Paris - continues to be the setting for the poet's wanderings and laments. In this section, the overall theme is the poet's life and everyday encounters and, even more importantly, non-encounters. "Dialogues," for example, points to the non-communication that characterizes the exile's life and perhaps modern man's life in general. It proves in fact that even the inner dialogue of one man - the poet - fails to bridge division. Non-communication between different aspects of the self is as prevalent as lack of communication between separate individuals. The conclusion the poet draws is this:

    Live, create, stubbornly and determinedly (one voice)
    What for, fool? Just halt your life and accept things as they are
    (another voice)

Only poetry remains a valid form of communication. Acknowledging that the poet will never know if a response to his work will be forthcoming or not, he still states that he believes that "grateful eyes" will "see" the "current of love" that is contained in his poetry (VII, "Rain").

The poet in this section is, as previously, supported by his craft and even the rain of "Rain" does not, in the end, dampen his "fire":

    How the rain lashes down... And in the cosy room--
    Is a poet. Before him on the table is paper.[...]
    He forgot his name,
    He forgot, where he is going and for what (VIII)

In spite of not knowing his own identity, the poem ends on the affirmative note of faith in art.

    At other moments despair takes over in spite of the comfort of art.
    In the poem "The Lie", for example, the poet reflects on "how difficult it is
to live as a human being," and in "The Void" he poses rhetorical
questions to those who live in "indifferently-gay" Paris answering these
by acknowledging that there is - in the "Sartrian" tradition -- "no way out"
and no escape from the "void." Knut's "trapped" souls remind us:

Shall they cry out? But they are shouting only in
the theaters of the poor quarters.
Shall they run away? But to where?
And just how do you run away from yourself?
A day - no worse than other days -
Of the past, the future and the imaginary...
And all around is the unchanging, indifferently-gay Paris. (XIV)

The primary theme of the second section of sixteen poems is love,
or more correctly, the invalidity of love. It deals with love that is lost
through "betrayal" (XXIV), love that is "separation" (XXVI), and love that,
in the end, is "mortal" (XIX). In "Mirage", the remnants of love are the
greatest gift love can give. The poet embraces his Beloved's "wingless
shoulders" (she used to be an angel but is an angel no more - through no
fault of her own) and admits "Our happiness has split, it was ground to
dust." (XXV) This outcome was inevitable in the "mirage" of the world
and therefore no one is to blame - not the "wingless angel," nor the
tormented poet. The torment and agony of love permeates virtually all
poems in this section and ironically comments on the promise contained
in the collection's title, Love's Sustenance. Ultimately, it proves that the
voice of love and "God's voice" ("Happiness," XXI) are incompatible.
One kind of love is temporary ("we are people who ceased to love each
other," XXVII) - the other love is not subject to decay. However, in this,
the most ironical of all Knut's collections, God's love is not affirmed as a
final "message." Thus the poem "Everything is in order" demonstrates only one thing: that nothing is in order. The poet is faced by the "whiter ocean of non-being" and not, as previously, by God's paternal and eternal love. Presumably, the final meeting with God takes place only in the incomplete cycle Prarodina - perhaps God can only be met there in the land where He first revealed Himself on earth.

Having presented a brief introduction to the imagery in Knut's poetic oeuvre, I now turn to the translations of the poems themselves. The collections are presented in chronological order, starting with Of My Millennia and ending with Love's Sustenance.
CHAPTER 3

Моих Тысячелетий (1925)

Of My Millennium
I.
Dovid-Ari ben Meir,
Son of Meir-Who Enlightens the Multitudes,
Born at the feet of Mount Ivanos,
In the abundant land of meagre polenta,
Sheep's milk cheese and sharp kachkaval\(^1\)
In the land of forests, of firmly-harnessed bulls,\(^2\)
Of merry wines and bronze-breasted women,
Where, among the steppes and reddish maize,
Smoky bonfires and gypsy encampments
Still roam;

I.
Dovid-Ari ben Meir,
Who as a lad sang to irate Saul,
Who gave
To Israel's rebellious sons
The six-edged shield.

I.
Dovid-Ari,
Whose sling extracted
The dying curses of Goliath,
From whose foot mountains trembled —
Came to your camp to study your songs,
But soon I'll tell you
Mine.

---

\(^1\) "Kachkaval" is a hard, round and thick Romanian cheese, made from sheep's milk. It is similar in color and taste to Swiss cheese, but without the holes. The origin of "kachkaval" is Turkish, meaning "fine cheese".

\(^2\) This word, "буян", is dialectic and typical of the South of the Russian empire.
Я,
Довид-Ари бен Меир,
Сын Меира—Кто Просвещает—Тьмы,
Рожденный у подножья Иваноса,
В краю обильном скудной мамалыги,
Овечьих брызня и острых качкавалов,
В краю лесов, бугаев крепкоудых,
Веселых вин и женщин бронзорудых,
Где, среди степей и рыжей кукурузы,
Еще кочуют дымные костры
И таборы цыган;

Я,
Довид-Ари бен Меир,
Кто отроком пел гневному Саулу,
Кто дал
Исраиля мятежным сыновьям
Шестиконечный щит;

Я,
Довид-Ари,
Чей пращ исторг
Предсмертные проклятья Голиафа,—
Того, от чей ступни дрожали горы—
Пришел в ваш стан учиться вашим песням,
Но вскоре вам скажу
Мою.

---

1 "Kachkaval" is a hard, round and thick Romanian cheese, made from sheep's milk. It is similar in color and taste to Swiss cheese, but without the holes. The origin of "kachkaval" is Turkish, meaning "fine cheese".
2 This word, "бугай", is dialectic and typical of the South of the Russian empire.
I remember it all:
The desert wastes of Canaan,
The sands and dates of hot Palestine,
The guttural groan of Arab caravans
The cedar of Lebanon and the boredom of the ancient walls
Of Sacred Jerusalem.

And the terrible hour:
The collapse, and crackle, and thundering of Mount Sinai,
When, in the flames, the sky opened wide\(^3\) to the accompaniment of thunder,
And in the cast iron vessel of rain-saturated storm clouds
The stem gaze of the Most High - Adonai
Peered down through the mirage at the petty creatures,\(^4\)
Gone astray and convulsing in the sand.

\(^3\) The verb "разверзлось" used here is the obsolete poetic form of "to open up wide, gape, yawn.
\(^4\) "Petty creatures" is a fairly weak translation of "тля", meaning insect or aphid.
Я помню все:
Пустыни Хананна,
Пески и финики горячей Палестины,
Гортанный стон арабских караванов,
Ливанский кедр и скуку древних стен
Святого Ерусалим.

И страшный час:
Обвал, и треск, и грохоты Сина,
Когда в огне разверзлось с громом небо
И в чугуне отягощенных туч
Возник, тугой, и в мареве глядел
На тлю заблудшую, что корчилась в песке,
Тяжелый глаз Владыки—Адоня.

3 The verb "разверзлось" used here is the obsolete poetic form of "to open up wide, gape, yawn.
4 "Petty creatures" is a fairly weak translation of "тля ", meaning insect or aphid.
I remember everything: the grief of the rivers of Babylon,
And the creak of wagons, and the tinkling of bells,
And the smoke and stench of father's little grocery shop —
The quince-tree, the halva, the garlic and the papusha\(^5\) that served as
my toy —
Filled the shop, where I guarded from the fingers of the Moldavians,
Mouldy plow-handles and minnows.

I,
Dovid-Ari ben Meir,
A wine that has fermented for thousands of years,
Have settled on the sand of roads,
So as to tell you, brethren, a tale
About the heavy burden of love and anguish —

The blessed burden of my millennia.

\(^5\) "Papusha" is a Romanian word for "doll", the type that a little girl might enjoy.
Я помню все: скорбь вавилонских рек,
И скрип телег, и дребезги кинор,
И дым, и вонь отцовской бакалейки —
Айва, халва, чеснок и папушой, —
Где я стерег от пальцев молдаван
Заплесневелые рогали и тарань.

Я,
Довид—Ари бен Меир,
Тысячелетия бродившее вино,
Остановился на песке путей,
Чтобы сказать вам, братья, слово
Про тяжкий груз любви и тоски —
Блаженный груз моих тысячелетий.

5 "Papusha" is a Romanian word for "doll", the type that a little girl might enjoy.
II. Wife

1
You lay down — a red desert.
Your gaze
Rises like the black sun rises,
Between the breasts of hills.

2
The fiery evening is cooling.
With a heart cracked by thirst,
(Already not once, and not twice...)
I keep searching for a well.

3
Here perished camels and people.
Beneath the flutter of eternal melodies.
With a dying cry of wonder.

4
It was,
It is,
It shall be.

5
Beneath the sands of sloping hips
There is constriction.
In taut silence
A taut muscle moves.
From the wind of my desires.
Жена

Ты рыжей легла пустыней.
Твой глаз
Встает, как черное солнце,
Меж холмами восставших грудей.

Вечер огненный стынет.
С сердцем, растресканным жаждой
(Уже не однажды, не дважды...),
Ищу и ищу колодца.

Здесь гибли верблюды и люди.
Под реянье вечных мелодий.
С предсмертным криком о чуде.

Было.
Есть.
Будет.

Под песками отлогих бедер
Уэко
В тугом молчанье
Ходит тугой мускул
От ветра моих желаний.
6
There will be a simoom. Storm clouds!
And we are barefoot and naked.
In anguish and thirst
An inflamed mouth demands
Moisture.

7
Soon comes the simoom! Powerfully the belly undulates in small ripples.
Behind the slight hillock
A camel stands and waits.

8
Soon will be the last effort!
Soon in the sands of the simoom --
There will be a meeting, a crying out, a battle...

9
Desire!...
Lord, save us and have mercy upon us.
Под песками отлогих бедер
Уэко
В тугом молчанье
Ходит тугой мускул
От ветра моих желаний.

Будет самум. Тучи!
А мы босы и наги.
В тоске и жажде
Влаги
Распаленный требует рот.
Скоро самум! Могучий
Мелко бьется живот.

За легким вэгорьем
Стоит и ждет верблюд.

Скоро последний труд!
Скоро в песках самума — встреча, крик, борьба.

Алеча!..
Господи, спаси и помилуй.
III. Exchange

1.
Beloved, for a single smile
Take this young camel,
This brightly colored, folding tent,
Two wicker baskets of olives from El Khiva
A pair of dark Arabian bracelets;
I shall divest myself of my finely wrought belt,
I shall add green soap --
Beloved, for just one single smile of yours --
And I shall be a successful merchant.

2.
In order to touch - for just an instant -- for a look at
Your olive-colored goats' breasts,
I shall give you gods from other lands,
And a small box of leather and a spoon,
And other precious objects
That passed into my possession from the caravan
Going southward from El' -Khoreim.
I shall give you iron earrings with emeralds,
Two skins which, to this day,
Never knew even a droplet of water,
I shall give you nuts and oils and pomegranates,
And sandals and crimson cloth.
In order to touch -- o charming one -- for a look at
Your olive-colored goats' breasts --

And I shall be a successful merchant.
Мена

1.
За оды, дорогая, улыбку
Вот — бери молодого верблюда,
Вот — цветную складную палатку,
Две плетенки маслин из Эль-Хивы,
Пару темных арабских запастьй,
Я сниму с себя кованый пояс,
Я добавлю зеленое мыло —
За одну, дорогая, улыбку —
И удачливый буду купец.

2.
Чтоб коснуться — на миг только — глазом
Твоих козьих оливковых грудей,
Я богов тебе дам чужестрачных,
И коробку из кожи, и ложку,
И другие дорогие вещи,
Что достались мне от каравана,
Шедшего на юг от Эль-Кореим.
Дам железные серьги с смарагдом,
Два меха, не знавшись доньне
И капельки капли воды,
Дам орехов, и масл, и гранатов,
И сандалей, и тканей пунцовых,

Чтоб коснуться — прелестная — глазом
Твоих козьих оливковых грудей —

И удачливый буду купец.
3.
For an old breast cloth held by strings,
The one which has absorbed the warm salt
Of your suntanned breasts, which wobble when you run,
Like some captive birds,
I shall cut off my hands and feet,
And I shall place, like a rare agate - before you,
My devoted eye.

For your old breast cloth held by strings --

And I shall make a bargain.
3.
За веревочный старый нагрудник,
Что пропах теплой солью загара
Твоих грудей, что бьются при беге,
Как некие пленные птицы,
Отсеку себе руки и ноги,
Положу небывалым агатом
Пред тобою мой преданный глаз.

За веревочный старый нагрудник—

И останусь еще в барыше.
IV.

And when, swaying,
The house and camp-fires shall become blurred in the distance
We, shivering from love and fear,
Secretly shall lie down on the warm sand.

The endless night above us
In a dark blue rhythm - in anguish - will waft the sound of its little bells --
In the darkness we will hear
How a ewe, awakened by us, is bleating.

V.

The setting sun set and faded
And the evening rocked the olive trees,
A merry and swarthy shepherd
I drove my goats into the valley.

Oh, salty goat's cheese,
Black bread and grape juice,
The sultry smell of her braid is
Flung upon the sand.

Though coffins may loom in the sky,
My mouth wanted to drink --
And in the coarse sand, the taste of
My woman's breasts was so good.

6 The verb "τύχημεν", from which the past tense "τύχα" is derived, is a fairly rare form.
IV.

И когда, колыхнувшись, неясными
Станут дом и огни вдалеке,
Мы, дрожа от любви и боязни,
Тайно ляжем на теплом песке.

Ночь над нами безмерная взвейет
В синем стуке — тоске — бубенца...
В темноте будет слышно, как блеет
Разбуженная нами овца.

V.

Закат тонул и тух,
И вечер качал маслины,
Веселый и смуглый пастух,
Я гнал своих коз в долины.

О козий соленый сыр,
Черный хлеб с виноградным соком,
Душный запах ее косы,
Брошенной в песок.

Пусть маячили в небе гробы,
Но рот хотел пит —
И на грубом песке так вкусно было
Мне женщину доить.

---

6 The verb "тумнуть", from which the past tense "тут" is derived, is a fairly rare form.
VI. Dust

Dust
Of the journey.
Depressed.
Sand.
Sultriness.
Sing.
God.

VII. Sarah

1.
Sarah,
My honey,
Under the breath of the sands of Canaan,
Harsh and hot,
Like Hagar,
You writhe under my caresses,
Uttering sweet moans,
Into the immobile crystalline evening
And the jingling sand
Of deserts.

2.
Spreading your hot legs,
Opening your last secret
Like pagan Hagar, you groan
Beneath the blissful
Weight
Of me.
VI.

Пыль
Дорог.
Уныл.
Песок.
Зной.
Пой,
Бог.

VII.

Сарра,
Мой мед,
От дыханья песков Ханаана
Тяжелый и теплый,
Агарью
Под лаской бьешься,
Испуская сладкие вопли
В недвижный стеклянный вечер
И звенячий песок
Пустынь.

Раскинув горячие ноги,
Разверзши последнюю тайну,
Агарью-язычницеей стонешь
Под грузом
Счастливым
Меня.
VIII. The Earth Loves Silence

The Earth loves silence.
The sun loves a mooing.
The wind loves the sounds
Of strings, wheels, and me.

I love my not knowing:
On whose threshold my love is.

IX. The Lake

Shimmery golden lake.
Black boat.
It's good to be alive.

Behind the naked tree --
The sunset has gotten stuck in the branches --
And it is flickering.

A solitary tree.
A solitary bench.
Be quiet. Quiet.

The evening air wafts softly.\(^7\)
Gush over me, coniferous wind!
It's good to be alive.

---

\(^7\) The original line in Russian, "Вечер вечер" contains an alliteration which is not duplicated in the English translation. There is a play on words with the initial "в" sound.
VIII.

Земя любит молчанье.
Солнце любит мычанье.
Ветер любит зычанья
Струн, колес, меня.

Я люблю мое незнанье:
На чьем пороге любовь моя.

IX. Озеро

Золотистое озеро.
Черная лодка.
Хорошо жить.

За голым деревом —
Зацепился за сучья —
Кольшется закат.

Одинокое дерево.
Одинокая скамейка.
Молчи. Молчи.

Вет вечер.7
Хлны, еловый ветер!
Хорошо жить.

7 The original line in Russian, "Bеет вечер" contains an alliteration which is not duplicated in the English translation. There is a play on words with the initial "v" sound.
X.

The evening, like a big bird
Settles in the grain, the fields.
The black earth smoulders, giving off smoke.
It breathes warmth.

The troubled nearby pine trees
Taunt me with their human tale.
Warmly the evening trickles down
Warmly glows the fence.

XI. Gloom

I waited for my menacing sovereign.
A moonlit spot trembled —
In the dead of night, such a starry night
A moan beat against my window.

Then, having smashed my one and only glass
Where temptation thirsted for my lips
I went quietly and surreptitiously
Into the night fog.

And my night, playing with sparkles
Of fires lit by someone,
Came toward me in the shape of crossroads
To the sound of silver horsehoes.

And I, universal and superfluous,
Having come to terms with sadness and joy,
Calmly went in the darkness and frost
Towards the flames of unknown bonfires.
X.

Вечер большого птицей
Садится в хлеб, в поля.
Черная, прете—дымится,
Дышит теплом земля.

Дразнит молвой человечей
Близкий смутный бор.
Теплый струится вечер.
Теплый стоит забор.

XI. Мрак

Я ждал вестительницу грозную.
Дрожало лунное пятно —
В глухую ночь, такую звездную.
Ударил стон в мое окно.

Тогда, разбив бокал единственный,
Где жаждал губ моих заман,
Ушел я тихо и таинственно
В ночной туман.

И ночь моя, играя блестками
Зажженных кем-то огоньков,
Мне шла навстречу перекрестками
Под эзон серебряных подков.

И я, вселенский и ненужный,
Печаль и радость поборов,
Спокойно шел во тьме и стуже
К огням неведомых костров.
XII.

Here is my home all empty. Flower, my staff\(^8\)
The wretched evening is so morose...
May shelter and peace come to you, God's dewdrops.
To you I give my sweet soul.

Shoddy stasis of cosmic rotations,
Futile battle of whatever horseshoes...

But in the hour of lonely and late exhaustion\(^9\)
I shall be saved by the wormwood\(^{10}\) of my poetry.

\(^8\)Reference to Wagner's opera Tannhäuser, where in the final act of the play, the young pilgrims sing: "The Lord a wonder has decreed: the staff of which the priest did tell has put forth leaves of freshest green" [p.93, libretto Tannhäuser, Wagner, Richard, 1988, Riverrun Press, New York.]
\(^9\)Here Knut evokes the poetic inspiration of Blok, who often used "глухий" a lot in various meanings.
\(^{10}\)The word "полянь" has connotations of bitterness, as well as the meaning of "wormwood".
XII.

Вот пуст мой дом. Цвети, мой посох. Убогий вечер так угрюм...
Приют и мир вам, божьи росы.
Вам – душу сладкую мою.

Варган и тупь мирокружений
Напрасный бой любых подков...

Но в чах глухих изнеможений
Спасет полынь моих стихов.

---

8 Reference to Wagner's opera Tannhäuser, where in the final act of the play, the young pilgrims sing: "The Lord a wonder has decreed: the staff of which the priest did tell has put forth leaves of freshest green" [p.93, libretto Tannhäuser, Wagner, Richard. 1988, Riverrun Press, New York.]
9 Here Knut evokes the poetic inspiration of Blok, who often used "глухий" a lot in various meanings.
10 The word "полынь" has connotations of bitterness, as well as the meaning of "wormwood".
PART TWO
XIII. Snow in Paris

Snow falls quietly
Upon hats, trams, roofs.
Quietly falls the snow.
Everything grows more muffled, more silent...

Is it devils that carry out a pogrom --
Are they slashing God's feather beds?
Is it an angel that is spreading out the carpet
Of remnants of heavenly crockery?

Or is it really the breathing of rivers,
Mine and that of other animals
That He turned into snow,
Delicate, simple, immaterial snow?

Ah, not to rot now
In this Parisian fog,
Where the human eye is lackluster
Where they wear their hearts like a hernia.

But to open one's eyes - and stand
In a huge white field;
Where the white expanse is abundant grace, --
Where there is scary white freedom.

So as not to see, not to know, not to guess.
And when the cheek-bones are burning hot,
Not to wait for a small light which,
Like a thief, might blink out of the snowy revelry.

---

11This is Knut's evokation of Mayakovsky, with the symbolism of clouds and trousers.
12This line is reminiscent of Babel's "Переход через Збруч" in his work Konarmiq, published in 1923-1926 in various serializations in Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa publications, and written about 1920.
XIII. Снег в Париже

Тихо падает снег
На шляпы, трамваи, крыши.
Тихо падает снег.
Все — глушь, белее, тише...

Черти лее чинят погром —
Порют божьи перины? 11
Ангел ли стелет ковром
Обробы райских кринов? 12

Или дыхание рек,
Мое и других животных
И впрямь обратил Он в снег,
Нежный, простой, бесплотный?..

Ах, не преть бы сейчас
В этом тумане Парижа,
Где тускл человечий глаз,
Где сердце носят, как грыжу.

Но открыть глаза — и стать
В огромном белом поле,
Где белая шири — благодать,
Где страшная белая воля.

Чтоб не видеть, не знать, не гадать.
И когда раскалит скулы,
Не ждать огонька, что как тать
Мигнул бы из снежных разгулов.

11 This is Knut's evokation of Mayakovsky, with the symbolism of clouds and trousers.
12 This line is reminiscent of Babel's "Переход через Збруч" in his work Konarmiq, published in 1923-1926 in various serializations in Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa publications, and written about 1920.
So that I might burn down like a candle of God’s,
Alone -- in the storm-swept steppe.
So that I might strain myself, struggle, resound,
Like a string in a storm-swept organ.

To stand with closed eyes
And listen to white voluptuousness...
To know: There’s no going back.
To grow encrusted with anguish and snow...

And having become more sacred than children,
And having forgiven Him for every offense,
To listen, listen to the snowstorm,
To stiffen, like a forgotten idol.
Чтоб горел я, Божья свеча,
Один — в степном урагане.
Чтобы тужился, бился, звучал,
Как струна, в ураганном органе.

Стоять, закрыв глаза,
И белую слушать негу...
Знать: нельзя назад.
Обрастатл тоской и снегом...

И став свяще детей,
И простив Ему всю обиду,
Слушать, слушать метель,
Стыть, как забытый идол.
XIV. 13

In the dull rainy drizzle
Hounded by the whistling of autumn,
I lose without regret
Those past - barren - days.

The moment I recall, how you, in a warm shawl
Strolled with me until daybreak.14
In the mirror of slippery asphalt
The streetlamps stand steadfast.

It's good to be streetlamps - they know the answers:
To what, where, and why.
Each evening the torch-bearer lights them
With a light on his shoulder.

But my Negligent Lamp-Lighter,
Why did You light me?
And place me flung-wide open
To the wind of four roads?

Why did you place me in the fog,
Where my own footsteps confuse me.
Why did you condemn me -- from the depths of silence
To emit nothing but lecherous and delirious sounds?

---

13 This poem appears again in the 1949 edition in a revised format and is given the title "Fear" ("Страх"). It also appears in the 1932 edition, Paris Nights, with only slight modifications, as the third poem.
14 At this point, we expect the poet to tell us about the moment, but it is so heart-breaking that he can't tell about it.
XIV. 13

В скучном дождливом мреяни,
Свистом осенум гоним,
Теряю без сожаления
Прощлые – бедные – дни.

Лишь вспомню, как в теплой шали ты
Гуляла со мной до зари.14
На зеркале скользких асфальтов
Твердо стоят фонари.

Хорошо фонарям – они знают:
Что, куда, зачем.
Каждый вечер их зажигает
Фонарщик с огнем на плече.

А мой Нерадивый Фонарщик,
Зачем Ты меня возжег?
Поставил распахнутым настежь
На ветру четырех дорог?

Поставил меня в тумане,
Где смутен мне собственный след.
Обрек – из недр молчанья
Исторгать только блюд и бред.

13 This poem appears again in the 1949 edition in a revised format and is given the title “Fear” (“Страх”). It also appears in the 1932 edition, Paris Nights, with only slight modifications, as the third poem.

14 At this point, we expect the poet to tell us about the moment, but it is so heart-breaking that he can't tell about it.
You gave me hands and feet,  
And ordered my heart to beat.  
But where are the roads  
Along which my legs are to go?  

We loaf about along deserted streets  
My brother and I -- the dissipated wind.  
An urban, unbridled dawn awkwardly stoops  
Behind the factory chimney.  

We stand before eternal eternity  
This terrifying world - and I  
I cannot be saved even by my carefreeness  
From the hole of non-existence.
Вот дал мне руки и ноги
И сердцу велел битл.
Но где же легли дороги,
По которым ноге ходить?

По пустынным шляемся улицам
Я и брат мой — беспутный ветр.
За трубой неуклюже сутулятся
Городской оголтелый рассвет.

Стоим перед вечной вечностью
Этот страшный мир — и я.
Не спасти мне даже беспечностью
От дыры небытия.
XV. By the Seine

A leaden evening,
    anguish and loneliness.
A hoarse breeze
    and streetlamps on the bridge.
A stinking stranger without a name, without a patronymic...
An empty sky – a damp void.

But alongside -- there are people,
    without nose, with empty sockets.
He kneads her breasts
    for 20 or 30 sous.
His grubby face shines with greed.
She submits, for the small renumeration.\(^{15}\)

And -- a bus will come from noisy Boulevard St. Michel,
And the ragged fog emit smoke,
And the waters splash in its granite gutters,

And, startled, Notre Dame will reel...
And only a street light, stubborn and impassive,
Won't even blink its greenish - red pupil.

Homeward, to my verses! Is my evening not filled with verse?
Ra-chell!...\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\)This word also has an obsolete meaning of "bribe" and a colloquial meaning of "promise".
\(^{16}\)In the Russian, there is a pun and rhyme that are untranslatable but convey that the poet is "sick" with love for Rachel (i.e. seized by that sacred sickness which is poetry and health and love at the same time!).
XV. У Сены

Свинцовый вечер,

toska i odisnachtsoe.
Хриплый ветер

i fonari mosta.
Воюющий кто-то бех имени, бех отчества...
Пустое небо — сырая пустота.

A рядом — люди,

beznoystoe, bezhlaaee,
On myot eй grudie

za dvadtsat’-treuats’ su.
Losnitsa xadnospolu lisko eho chumazoe.
Ona pokorstvuet za nebolshoy posul.15

Vot autobus pridet iz groxov Cen-mishela,
I zadymit vsklochenenny tuman,
I tok vsplesnet v sovey granitnoy sheli,

I, vzdrognyvshi, kachnyetsa Notr-Dam...
I lixh fonary, upranyh i besstrashnyh,
I ne mignyet etschakhm zeleno-crasnym.

Domoy, k stikhama! Mow vecher ne stiki lь?
Pa — xil!..16

15 This word also has an obsolete meaning of "bribe" and a colloquial meaning of "promise".
16 In the Russian, there is a pun and rhyme that are untranslatable but convey that the poet is "sick" with love for Rachel (i.e. seized by that sacred sickness which is poetry and health and love at the same time).
XVI. It is Cold

On the bridge there is a streetlight.
Under the bridge there is a streetlight.
And the water is trembling.

On the bridge there is a streetlight.
Under the bridge there is a streetlight.
And the wind extinguishes the wail.

On the bridge there is a streetlight.
Under the bridge there is a streetlight.
Nightfall.
XVI. Холодно

На мосту фонарь.
Под мостом фонарь.
Дрожит вода.

На мосту фонарь.
Под мостом фонарь.
Ветер тушит плач.

На мосту фонарь.
Под мостом фонарь.
Ночь.
XVII. My Hour

When the firm factory siren
Pushes open the gates,
I go to my house,
Humble, simple, and meek.

And, like Pontius Pilate, having washed my hands,
And thrown the world off my shoulder,
I enter into incomparable torments,
Into my elevated and solemn hour.

And it is for this brief hour that
I live for centuries like a donkey,
Drink tea and eat meat,
Talk about everything.

It is for this lengthy hour that
I will cheat earthly deception
So that the sorrow of harvest failures and droughts
Might cover the fog of my eyes.

So that -- deaf and blind -- I might wait
For the remote news about that.
So that I might with a letter mark for ever
My boredom and my delight.
XVII. Мой Час

Когда распахнет ворота
Твердый фабричный гудок,
Смиренен, прост и кроток,
Иду я в мой дом.

И, как Понтий, умыв руки,
Сбросив мир с моего плеча,
Я вхожу в бесподобные муки,
В мой высокий торжественный час.

Вот для этого малого часа
Я столетья живу ослом,
Пью чай и ем мясо,
Разговариваю обо всем.

Вот для этого долгого часа
Обману я земной обман
Чтобы скорь недородов и засух
Покрывал моих глаз туман.

Чтобы ждать — глухой и незральный —
Одтленную весть о том.
Чтобы буквой на веки означить
Мою скуку и мой восторг.
XVIII. Submissiveness

I lie under You, God,
And the burden is so gratifying to me.
Look: I obey unwearyingly
I toil, I pray, I fear.

I accept mundane toil --
I swallow food and accept labor.
Every day I face care and troubles
And I worry and I hurry, and I yell.

No earthly weights,
Most Superior Father, can measure
Your Name Alone,
And all of you are on top of me!

I go about a devout wanderer,
With You who are so heavy on my back,
But just Your finger, My God
Crushes a hundred universes.18

I don't ask You for a single thing.
Each day I leave for the factory.
Patiently I bear - and wear out
My days, my ideals, my life.19

I keep silent in the stillness,
As a miser counts his money.
I hear -- how the insinuating snow
Is covering boats and brooms.

---

17 The Russian term "pood" is used here.
18 The Russian term is usually singular, with no plural form. Knut uses a plural form here, however, thus the usage of the plural form in the translation.
19 This word "жизнь" used here has the Church Slavonic meaning of life.
XVIII. Покорность

Лежу под Тобою, Господи,  
И так мне отраден груз.  
Смотри: неустанно покорствую —  
Тружусь, молюсь, боюсь.

Принимаю земные работы —  
Принимаю пищу и труд.  
Каждый день выхожу н заботы  
И волнуюся, спешу, ору.

Никакими пудами земными,17  
Превосходный Отец мой, не взвесить  
Одно Твое Имя,  
А Ты на мне весь.

Хожу, богомольный скиталец,  
С тяжелым Тобой на спине,  
А один Твой, Боже мой, палец  
Паразчит сто вселенных.18

Ни о чем Тебя не спрашиваю.  
Каждый ден ухожу на завод.  
Терпеливо ношу—изнашиваю  
Мой дни, идеалы, живот.19

Молчу в тишине,  
Как скупо считает деньги.  
Слышу — вкрадчивый снег  
Засыпает лодки и веники.

17 The Russian term "пуд" is used here.  
18 The Russian term is usually singular, with no plural form. Knut uses a plural form here,  
however, thus the usage of the plural form in the translation.  
19 This word "живот" used here has the Church Slavonic meaning of life.
White wind, fill me with fever chill.
Snow flakes gay and malicious!
All that I knew and loved
Lies, like a 5 kopeck piece
Beneath a snow-drift.
In this manner --
A snowy Thursday --
I
Rejected
And
Buried all.

I would adore everything,
Like a stocky horse neighs.
But the conflagration is blazing,
And in the fog the boundary lies,
And in the darkness, --

Where there is laughter,
Where there is sin,
Where a walnut breathes, --

More sharp and dangerous
Than a knife
Is the idle
Touch.
Белый ветер, зной.
Хлопья веселой злобы!
Все, что я знал и любил,
Лежит, как пятак,
Под сугробом,
Так —
В снежный четверг —
Я
Отверг
и
Угробил.

Я бы все обожал,
Как ржет коренастая лошадь.
Но полыхает пожар,
И в тумане лежит межа,
И во тьме,—
   Где смех,
   Где грех,
   Где дышит орех,—

Ножа
Острей и опасней
Напрасная
Ощущь.

107
I stand at the bridge.
Thus the prophet bore the tablets.20
Silence is guarding my mouth
Waiting for lips to compress.

20 The reference here to the prophet is clearly a biblical reference to Moses. The first reference to Moses on Mount Sinai with the stone tablets written by God occurs in Exodus 31:18; The next is Exodus 32:15-16 and 19; The final reference is the second time Moses goes to Mount Sinai, when God carves the second set of tablets and again inscribes the Ten Commandments. This comprises all of Exodus, chapter 34.
Стою у моста.
Так пророк носил скрижали.
Стоит тишина у рта.
Ждет, чтоб губы сжались.

20 The reference here to the prophet is clearly a biblical reference to Moses. The first reference to Moses on Mount Sinai with the stone tablets written by God occurs in Exodus 31:18; The next is Exodus 32:15-16 and 19; The final reference is the second time Moses goes to Mount Sinai, when God carves the second set of tablets and again inscribes the Ten Commandments. This comprises all of Exodus, chapter 34.
XIX. Apotheosis

Keep silent.
Close your obscene lips.
The red-hot seal will be imprinted
Upon the tongue, coarse and crude, unsuited for its task.

In the silence
Unprecedented,
Vast,
Deafening,
My ears will rise up obediently
To listen:

Lord, do you see:
I stand
Small,
Mute,
Humble.
I am 21
The last dog.

I am
The last louse egg
Sucking Your udder... 22

Remain silent.
Dissolve the soul in silence.
To listen.

21 This the Old Church Slavonic form of the First Person Pronoun Singular meaning "I".
22 Knut's use of imagery in "Apotheosis" is reminiscent of Sergei Esenin's 1918 poem, "Иония", which addresses and refers to the poet himself (i.e. Esenin) as a prophet, "Так говорит по Библии/ Пророк Есенин Сергей ". The poem "Иония " is divided into four parts and was written in January, 1918.
XIX. Апофей

Молчать.
Замкнуть непристойные губы.
На язык неподобный и грубый
Каленая ляжет печать.

В тишине,
Небывалой,
Огромной,
Глушительной,
Почтильно восстанут уши.
Слушать.

Господи, видишь:
Стой
Мал,
Нем,
Прост.
Аз есмь21
Последний пес.

Аз есмь
Последняя гнида,
Сосущая Твое вымя...22

Молчать.
Растопить в молчании душу.
Слушать.

21 This the Old Church Slavonic form of the First Person Pronoun Singular meaning "I".
22 Knut's use of imagery in "Apotheosis" is reminiscent of Sergei Esenin's 1918 poem, "Инокия", which addresses and refers to the poet himself (i.e. Esenin) as a prophet, "Так говори по Библии/ Пророк Есенин Сергей ". The poem "Инокия " is divided into four parts and was written in January, 1918.
And now
In the silence
For me
There is a tiding:
He exists.

And now
In the silence
There is a song
For me:
He is.

And now,
In the silence
There is a sign for me:
So it is.

I was illuminated by a calm light —
Spring smells wafted towards me —
I was showered by celestial bliss.

Flutter about,
Spread warmth,
Benevolence.

Burn,
The darkness.
The endless one.
И вот
В тишине
Мне
Вест:
Есть.

И вот
В тишине
Мне
Песнь:
Так.

И вот
В тишине
Мне
Знак:
Так.

Светом тихим озарило —
Вешним духом закадило —
Горным счастьем осенило.

Рей,
Грей,
Благодатное.

Жги
Зги
Нео́ятные.
Give bounty
To all, o Lord,
To all, my God.

--To all whose souls are in soot
--To all who differ from decent people
--Who are strange and transitory
--To all the snouts and mugs\textsuperscript{23}
Of your catch.

Lord!
I hold my breath.
I cannot stand upright.
I do not dare --

In the heavenly rumble,
In the paradisical stampede,

There shimmers blue --
There flutters about --
The Word.

Inexplicable.
Incomparable.
Unrepeatable.

\textsuperscript{23} The images of snouts and mugs evoked here are Mayakovskian in nature, however Knut uses these images to create the opposite impression. While Mayakovsky uses images to demonstrate that God does not exist and is foolish, Knut uses this stanza and images to demonstrate that God is great and does exist.
Даждь благодать
Всем, Господи,
Всем, мой Боже:

— Чьи души в копоти,
— На людей непохожим,
— Странным— перехожим,
— Всем харям и рожам
Твоего улова.²³

Господи!
Не дышу.
Не стою.
Не смею —

В небесном ропоте,
В райском топоте,

Синеет —
Реет —
Слово.

Неизъяснимое.
Бесподобное.
Неповторное.

²³ The images of snouts and mugs evoked here are Mayakovskian in nature, however Knut uses these images to create the opposite impression. While Mayakovskyn uses images to demonstrate that God does not exist and is foolish, Knut uses this stanza and images to demonstrate that God is great and does exist.
CHAPTER 4

Вторая книга

Second Book

(1927)
I.

I shall not die. And could it really be,  
That - without me - in space triumphant  
The earth would draw a fiery thread  
Of senseless, joyful wandering.¹

It cannot be that - without me - the earth,  
Rotating among worlds, would flower and fade,  
That without me poplars would rustle,  
That snow would swirl about, but I - would have ceased to be!

That cannot be. I state: no.  
I will live, taut, stubborn-browed,²  
And at the terrible hour, in my devastated dream,  
I shall push off with my hands the lid of the coffin.

I shall push it off and cry out: I don't want to!  
I need this unseeing joy!  
I need walks with my beloved - shoulder to shoulder!  
I need to call the sun by a new word³!

No, you won't lay me down in a stifling box.  
Me who has rejected decay, fate and time.  
To live I want, and I shall live and live,⁴  
And even in the void amass empty lines.

¹ Obsolete word: СТРАНСТВИЕ. The word for "wandering" in the Russian original is archaic and hence has a poetic aura.  
² Neologism created by Knut.  
³ The original says "word", without the epithet "now". Knut however, undoubtedly speaks of a metaphor (i.e. a "new word").  
⁴ Knut creates an intertextual allusion to Lermontov and Blok with this line.
I.

Я не уму. Не разве может бытк,
Чтоб — без меня — в ликующем пространстве
Земля чертила огненную нить
Бессмысленного, радостного странствия.¹

Не может быть, чтоб — без меня — земля,
Катясь в мирах, цвела и отцветала,
Чтоб без меня шумели тополя,
Чтоб снег кружился, а меня — не стало!

Не может быть. Я утверждаю: нет.
Я буду жить, тугой упрямолобый,²
И в страшный час, в опустошенном сне,
Я оттолкну руками крышку гроба.

Я оттолкну и крикну — не хочу!
Мне надо этой радости незречей!
Мне с милой гулять — плечом к плечу!
Мне надо солнце словом обозначить!³

Нет, в душный ящик вам не уложить
Отвернувшего тлен, судьбу и сроки.
Я жить хочу, и буду жить и жить,⁴
И в пустоте копить пустые строки.

¹ Obsolete word: странствие. The word for "wandering" in the Russian original is archaic and hence has a poetic aura.
² Neologism created by Knut.
³ The original says "word", without the epithet "now". Knut however, undoubtedly speaks of a metaphor (i.e. a "new word").
⁴ Knut creates an intertextual allusion to Lermontov and Blok with this line.
II. Music

To Iurii Terapiano

I.

An enormous bridge, rocking, was sailing in the setting sun,
Carrying me betwixt heaven and earth...
How can I tell you, aggrieved brethren,
About that large, radiant peace.  
Rapture seized me. Thoughtless and endless...
For the first time I experienced bliss and -- I was alone.
But there, below, the water softly rocked
Me and the bridge and happiness that had no cause.

II.

My path is firm and my lot distinguished,
And the hand that leads me is light:
It is good to walk in the blessed heaven,
To tread cautiously on the clouds.

Dissolving in blissful grace,
I send you greetings, my earth.
You have given me to drink and to eat,
A speck of dust revolving in the throng of stars.

Light is the path and salutary the lot:
Here I am again on our small earth,
Here again I am in love - and earning my bread by the sweat of my brow,
Anew I walk in inscrutable darkness.

5 I have used the word "betwixt" because it is stylistically equivalent to the Russian term with archaic poetic flavor.
6 I have chosen the archaic term 'brethren' to emphasize the overall solemn flavor of the poem.
7 Theoretically, the word "покой", which could also mean room. The meaning "peace" seems primary here.
8 Archaic word: собрание - assembly, throng.
II. Музыка

Юрию Терапиано

1.
Огромный мост, качаясь, плыл в закате,
Несся меня меж небом и землей...
Как вам сказать, обиженные братья,6
Про тот большой сияющий покой.7

То был восторг. Без мысли и начала.
Я в первый раз был счастлив и — один.
А там, внизу, вода едва качала
Меня и мост и счастье без причин.

2.
Путь мой тверд и превосходен жребий,
И рука ведущая легка:
Хорошо гулять в блаженном небе,
Бережно ступать по облакам.

Расторяясь в благодати милой,
Шлю привет тебе, моя земля.
Ты меня поила и кормила,
В сонме8 звезд вращаясь и пыля.

Легок путь и благотворен жребий:
Вот я вновь на маленькой земле,
Вот я вновь в любви — и в трудном хлебе,
Вновь хожу в непостижимой мгле.

5 I have used the word "betwixt" because it is stylistically equivalent to the Russian term with archaic poetic flavor.
6 I have chosen the archaic term 'brethren' to emphasize the overall solemn flavor of the poem.
7 Theoretically, the word "покоi", which could also mean room. The meaning "peace" seems primary here.
8 Archaic word: сонм - assembly, throng.
And when I gaily shall withstand
Despair and decay --
It is the surf of the universe that beats in my heart
My powerful music.\(^9\)

---

\(^9\) in "Music", Knut creates an imitation of Khodosevich, with the image of the separation of the physical and the astral body.
И когда отчаянью и тлену
Весело противостану я —
Это в сердце бьет прибой вселенной,
Музыка⁹ могучая моя.

⁹ In "Music", Knut creates and imitation of Khodosevich, with the image of the separation of the physical and the astral body.
Set times will be fulfilled --
We shall fly off in a carefree throng
To that place, where the difficult lessons of happiness
Will prove a child's game.

We shall fly through chasms and constellations
To God's promised shelter
To receive fair judgement for everything --
For our grief, steadfastness and vice.

But I know: the heart, which already does not recall anything,
Will prove too weak to understand
That even without us, the precious clump of
Earth - so poor - will continue to rotate.

There in the cold of sweetest ether,
Watching earth sinking in the distance,
We shall be scorched by the memory
Of the orphaned heavy happiness we knew there.

We suddenly shall understand:
That the piece of earthly bread
And the dust of the earth, plain and pockmarked,
Is dearer to us than the radiant heaven of the silvery blue void.

And the nobility of the proud landscape --
Of cosmic space and stars, burning like dawn,
Will not replace for us the apple trees -- nor -- even! ---
A crooked street lamp in the city.  

---

10 This poem evokes Sergei Esenin's poetry, dealing with his imminent departure to another world. The word " яблони ", "apple trees" is the clear intertextual marker of Knut's referral to Esenin.
Исполняются поставленные сроки —
Мы отлетим беспечною гурьбой
Туда, где счастья трудного уроки
Окажутся младенческой игрой.

Мы пролетим сквозь бездны и созвездья
В обещанный божественный приют
Пить за все достойное возмездье —
За нашу горечь, мужество и блюд.

Но знаю я: не хватит сил у сердца,
Уже не помнящего ни о чем,
Понять, что будет и без нас вертеться
Земной — убогий — драгоценный ком.

Там, в холодке сладчайшего эфира,
Следя за глыбой, тонущей вдали,
Мы обожжемся памятью о сиром,
Тяжеловесном счастии земли.

Мы вдруг поймем: сияющего неба,
Пустыни серебристо-голубой
Дороже нам кусок земного хлеба
И пыль земли, невзрачной и рябой.

И благородство гордого пейзажа —
Пространств и звезд, горяющих как заря,
Нам не заменит яблони,10 ни — даже! —
Кривого городского фонаря.

10 This poem evokes Sergei Esenin's poetry, dealing with his imminent departure to another world. The word "яблони", "apple trees" is the clear intertextual marker of Knut's referral to Esenin.
And we shall ask passionately and piously
For the ancient sweet primitive darkness,
For a new life, poor and beautiful,
On dear, on torturous earth.

It occurs to me: Should you, God, call us
Beyond the seven heavens into your blessed space
We even there - forgive me - shall, perhaps, sigh for,
For that futility, that we call earth.

#4 Gratitude\(^1\)
Humbly wise I avert my ears
From the heaven that angels opened up to me.
Is it for me, the unworthy one, to suddenly proclaim the fiery cock,
And music of luminous wings\(^2\)

I thank You for everything: for the bread,
For the dust and heat of my meager road,
Because I was not blinded for good
To the virtue of desperate and difficult happiness.

For this flesh, doomed by You
To enjoy wine and bread, the letter and woman.
For my heart, burdened by ancient sleep,
For life and death, entrusted to me.

Because, from childhood I heard trumpets in the skies,
And saw a finger, stem and great.
Because my body, poor and coarse,
You salted with a merry soul. \(^3\)

---

\(^1\) This title evokes another well-known poem, also entitled "Gratitude" by Lermontov.
\(^2\) Knut uses the obsolete form of the genitive plural form of "wings" here.
\(^3\) In "Gratitude" and other poems in this first part of Вторая книга Knut explores different registers which emphasize a juxtaposition of the profane with the sacred.
И мы попросим набожно и страстно
О древней сладостной животной мгле,
О новой жизни, бедной и прекрасной,
На милой, на мучительной земле.

Мне думается: позови нас Боже
За семь небес, в простор блаженный свой,
Мы даже там — прости — вздохнем, быть может,
По той тщете, что мы зовем землей.

IV. Благодарность

Смиренномудро отвращаю слух
От неба, что мне ангелы раскрыли.
Мне ль, недостойному, вдруг возвестит петух
Огонь и пение лучезарных крыльев!

Благодарю Тебя за все: за хлеб,
За пыль и жар моей дороги скудной,
За то, что я не навсегда ослеп
Для радости, отчаянной и трудной.

За эту плоть, Тобою обреченную
Вину и хлебу, букве и жена.
За сердце, древним сном отягощенное,
За жизнь и смерть, доверенные мне.

За то, что с детства слышал в небе трубы а
И видел перст, суровый и большой.
За то, что тело, бедное и грубое,
Ты послолил веселою душой.

11 This title evokes another well-known poem, also entitled "Gratitude" by Lermontov.
12 Knut uses the obsolete form of the genitive plural form of "wings" here.
13 In "Gratitude" and other poems in this first part of БЕЗОДА О СИ СКИЯ, Knut explores
different registers which emphasize a juxtaposition of the profane with the sacred.
Here a man lives - he walks, eats and writes,
And he shakes hands with acquaintances and relatives...
Here a man lives and thankfully breathes\(^{14}\)
The beautiful, tasty air of earth.

And his little cloud of cheerful breath,
Flying lightly into the native sky,
Passes along the ancient path of ecstasy and erring
And sinks to earth, as dew.

And he recalls his flight, his rotation
In the cosmic enigmatic dust,
And the coldness of the heights, and the cleansing flame,
And all the roads of the earth and sky.

Obedient to gaiety, love and joy
He, keeping a steadfast faith, has mastered
The temptations of frivolousness and of fainthearted tedium,
An infamous, humiliating lot.

Let the destitute skeptic say spiteful things and slander the creation,
Here goes someone, not hiding his good fortune,
And greedily he touches terrestrial things with his hands
These witnesses of his delightful existence.

Here a man lives and breathes thankfully.
He has forgiven all, aspiring -- to comprehend.
And, listening to himself, he hears His breathing,
And life to him is mistress and mother.

\(^{14}\) Note that this line is also repeated as the first line of the final, sixth stanza, which lend a kind of ring composition to this poem.
V.

Здесь человек живет – гуляет, ест, и пишет,
И руки жмет знакомым и родным...
Здесь человек живет и благодарно дышит¹⁴
Прекрасным, вкусным воздухом земным.

И облачко его веселого дыханья,
Легко летя в родные небеса,
Проходит древний путь горений и блужданий
И падает на землю, как роса.

И вспоминает он свой лет, свое вращенье
В космической таинственной пыли,
И холодна высот, и пламя очищения,
И все дороги неба и земли.

Веселию, любви и радости послушный,
Он в мужественной вере одолел
Соблазны пустоты и скуки малодушной
Бесславный, унизительный удел.

Пуст нищий малорев элословит и клевещет,
Здесь ходит некто, счастья не та,
И жадно трогает рукой земные вещи
Свидетелей отрады бытия.

Здесь человек живет и благодарно дышит.
Он все простил в стремлении – понять.
И, слушая себя, Его дыханье слышит,
И жизнь ему любовница и мать.

¹⁴ Note that this line is also repeated as the first line of the final, sixth stanza, which lend a kind of ring composition to this poem.
VI.

I am lying on the rough shore,
Warmed by the salty air.
And I am lovingly keeping life going,
The gift of much happiness and light.

And having tempered my heart with sunlight,
Having cleared it of desire,
I hear the regal flow
Of the imperturbable radiance.

Thus, laved by the wave of
Bliss, well-tried for centuries,
I accept the labor and scorching heat
And anticipate the terrestrial bread,
Like a pious co-communion
With fateful and blessed cosmos.

VII.

Even though life is becoming more turbid and impassable perhaps
Even if speaking to others may be difficult,
Even if labor is becoming ever more futile and absurd,
I thank You for the right: to live.

Although the tumultuous and disastrous years
Rock us in misty smoky spheres,
Like river steamers that are not sea-worthy --
Sailing in oceanic darkness,
VI.

Лежу на груном берегу,
Соленым воздухом согретый,
И жизнь любовно берегу,
Дар многой радости и света.

И сердце солнцем прокалив,
Его очистив от желаний,
Я слышу царственный прилив
Невозмутимого сиянья.

Так, омываемый волной
В веках испытанного счастья,
Я принимаю труд и зной
И предвкушаю хлеб земной,
Как набожное сопричастье
Вселенной, трудной и благой.

VII.

Пусть жизнь становится мутной и непролазней,
Пусть трудно с человеком говорить,
Пусть все бесплодней труд и несураэней,
Благодарю Тебя за право: жить.

Пусть шаткие и гибельные годы
Качают нас в туманэ и дыму,
Как утлы речные параходы,
Плывя в океаническую тьму —
Verily\textsuperscript{15}, this fee is paltry:
But a tear and a sigh - for the steppe, for the song far off,
For a sweet voice, for the glance of a fellow-man,
For the air of cheerful earth.

VIII.

Yes, I am guilty of inordinate happiness --
And I rejoice in my simplicity.
I assert -- by self-willed authority --
The pre-conscious joy of existence.

It is a hard fate: To talk, among the thick-set and uninspired,
Of lightness and of heaven; to wrestle
Among the half-dead, the mendacious, and the despondent
To keep faith, to rejoice, to exist.

I call you to become my accomplices and brethren,
Without contempt for your blindness,
Hear then the breath of bliss and abundance
Above this world of complex futility.

Persistently saving you from death,
I beg you: for your sake -- and for my sake --
Give yourselves over to me -- and trust in the voice
That speaks for the lost joy of existence.

\textsuperscript{15} The word "воистину" is obsolete and conveys a religious flavor. An example would be the line from the traditional religious service: "Христос воскресе, воистину воскресе...."
Воистину,15 ничтожна эта плата:
Слеза и вздох — за стень, за песнь вдали,
За милый голос, за глаза собрата,
За воздух жизнерадостной земли.

VIII.

Да, я повинен в непомерном счастьи —
И в простоте своей ликую я.
Я утверждаю — самовольной властью —
Домысленную радость бытия.

Трудна судьба: средь грузных и бескрылых
О легкости, о небе говорить,
Средь полумертвых, лживых и унылых
Бороться, верить, радоваться, быть.

Я вас зову в сообщники и братья,
Не презирай вашей слепоты,
Услышьте же дыханье благодати
Над этим миром трудной суеты.

Настойчиво спасая вас от смерти,
Я вас прошу: для вас — и для меня —
Предайте мне и голосу поверьте
Утерянной отрады бытия.

15 The word "воистину" is obsolete and conveys a religious flavor. An example would be the line from the traditional religious service: "Христос воскресе, воистину воскресе...."
IX.
The granite is turning pink in the delicate steel of the heavy sea. 
In the sky the joyful cloudy snow slowly melts. 
On the warmed rock, forgetful of success and grief -- 
On the top of it -- a man lies alone.
IX.

Розовеет гранит в нежной стали тяжелого моря.
В небе медленно плавится радостный облачный снег.
Н нагретой скале, позабыв про удачу и горе,
На вершине ее — одиноко лежит человек.
This man - it is I. Unnoticed and apparently superfluous,
I am lying on the rock face, not looking -- anywhere -- not seeing anything...
I hear the salt and expanse and befriending the wave beforehand,
I am lying, like a seal, I breathe -- and as if to no purpose!

It is enormous, my labor. A carefree, but experienced craftsman,
I taught myself to preserve, tirelessly and faithfully,
The memory of an ancient land\textsuperscript{16}, the dense light of unconditional bliss.
The unsatiable thirst: to walk, to embody myself, to love.

X.

I went out. Around me, as though by command,
Life rose up, nothingness took shape.
Buzzing, bellowing, mooing - herds of people
Trams and motorcars rushed off simultaneously.

I am in the center of a world arising.
Trees, stones, temples and bars,
Are running from me along the radii
Where death, love and labor bustle.

The world of apparitions, free and boundless,
Suddenly was embodied, revived and it lives,
And, obeying a centrifugal will,
It rises and grows stronger, it expands and it grows.

Each step offers up a new embodiment to me:
Here a house has arisen from smoke and sand,
I cast a glance - and look, in improbable indolence,
Blue clouds roll...

\textsuperscript{16} I assume this to be the land evoked in \textit{My Millennia}, or Palestine or a merger of both.
Человек – это я. Незаметный и будто ненужный,
Я лежу на скале, никуда – ни на что – не смотря...
Слышу соль и простор, и с волной заранее дружный,
Я лежу, как тюлень, я дышу – и как будто бы зря!

Он огромен, мой труд. Беззаботный, но опытный мастер,
Я себя научил неустанно и верно хранить
Память древней земли, плотный свет безусловного счастья,
Ненасытную жажду: ходить, воплощаться, любить.

X.

Я вышел. Вкруг меня, как по приказу,
Восстал жизнь, оформилось ничто,
Гудя, ревя, мыча – рванулись сразу
Стада людей, трамваев и авто.

Я в центре возникающего мира.
По радиусам от меня бегут
Деревья, камин, храмы и трактиры,
Где суетятся смерть, любовь и труд.

Мир приказов, свободный и безбрежный,
Вдруг воплотился, ожил и живет,
И, повинуясь воле центробежной,
Встет и крепнет, ширится, растет.

Мне каждый шаг являет воплощение:
Вот дом возник из дыма и песка,
Взглянул – и вот, в невероятной лени,
Катятся голубые облака...

16 I assume this to be the land evoked in *My Millennia*, or Palestine or a merger of both.
By my sensual and coarse desire,
A captivating and complex world is born:
A motorcar rushes, chimney stacks emit smoke in the sky,
And the sounds of hardly audible lyres hover over everything.\(^{17}\)

XI.

From my window I peer downward into the depths.
I can see a great deal more clearly from my lofty roof.
A bluish breeze rocks the heavens.
Words are being born. We shall soon write them down.

My old home quivers. It is old, shaggy, but sturdy,
And the inconsistency of the winds doesn't scare it.
We soon shall start swimming to a quiet heavenly port,
Toward celestial lights, into purest spaces.

My home is casting off. The rumble of the surf grows.
We are sinking into a dim maritime evening.
I welcome unknown friends, extending my hand:
Farewell, my dear old ones, until our fraternal meeting in
the near future.

Farewell, my dears, I am forsaking you
And in this strict hour, stern, deaf and dumb,
I am in a hurry to say to you for the last time
A simple-hearted and friendly word:

I have seen many calamities and all kinds of evil,
The vanity of human fate, intricate and destitute,
I knew living persons, charred to ashes.
And heard the voices of those resting in the cemetery.

\(^{17}\) This atmosphere is reminiscent of Olesha's cityscapes.
Моим хотеньем, чувственным и грубым,
Рожден пленительный и сложный мир:
Летит авто, дымятся в небе трубы,
И реют звуки еле слышных лир.17

XI.

Из моего окна гляжу глубоко вниз.
Мне многое видней с моей высокой крыши.
Качает небеса голубоватый бриз.
Рождаются слова. Мы скоро их запишем.

Дрожит мой старый дом. Он стар, можнат, но тверд,
И не его страшит ветров непостоянство.
Мы скоро поплывем в небесный тихий порт,
На звездные огни, в чистейшие пространства.

Мой дом отчаливает. Глухе бьет прибой.
Мы погружаемся в морской неверный вечер.
Неведомых друзей приветствую рукой
Прощайте, милые, до скорой братской встречи.

Прощайте, милые, я покидаю вас
И в этот строгий час, глухонемой, суровый,
Вам тороплюсь сказать в последний раз
Просторосердечное и дружеское слово

Я видел моего бед и всяческого зла,
Тщету людской судьбы, затейливой и нищей,
Я знал живых людей, обугленных до тла,
И слышал голоса лежащих на кадище.

17 This atmosphere is reminiscent of Olesha's cityscapes.
I saw, how in spring a healthy man,
Amongst gay earthly abundance,
Stood and turned to stone, not raising his eyelids,
And stonily sobbed from terror and feebleness.

How a man abandoned his wife and mother
And set off to wander, going mad from boredom,
There was no air and no point to breathing.
And the air was heavier than granite to him.

I have heard a howl in the night - an inhuman loud cry,
The despair of the living witnessing aimless destruction.
Neither my tongue, nor yours, knows words that could
Recount this infinite sorrow.

... And all the same, leaving for the fields of other times,
Before the impenetrable haze of wanderings and discoveries,
Fortified by all my hard-won knowledge
I say to you, my friends: live and live.

Render unto the Lord great praise,
And close your hearts to abuse, doubt, reproach,
For the sake of the cradle and the grave, for the light of day and
for the darkness,
For the sake of the captivating chorus of a polyphonic life.
Я видел, как весной здоровый человек,
Среди веселого земного изобилия,
Стоял и каменел, не поднимая век,
И каменно рыдал от страха и бессилья.

Как человек броцал жену свою имать
И уходил блуждать, от скуки безумен,
И было нечем — незачем — дышать,
И воздух был ему гранита тяжелее.

Я слышал вой в ночи — нечеловечий зык,
Отчаянье живых пред гибелью бесцельной.
Таких не знает слов ни мой, ни ваш язык,
Чтоб рассказать об этой скорби беспредельной.

... И все же, уходя в поля иных времен,
Пред непроглядной мглой бужданий и открытий,
Всем знанием моим нелегким укреплен,
Вам говорю, друзья: живите и живите.

Воздайте Господу великую хвалу,
Закрыв сердца хуле, соменье, укоризне,
За колыбель и гроб, за свет дневной и мглу,
За хор пленительный моноголосой жизни.
XII.

To abide by the law and daily lechery,  
In the thick\textsuperscript{18} boredom of a useless life,  
To work, eat and sleep on the edge of the abyss --  
This is righteous and steadfast labor.

To live by one's own full, passionate and stubborn will,  
In the monotony of lead-grey days.  
To go resiliently, joyfully and straightforwardly  
Towards one's own certain destruction.

There is no exploit more worthy and lofty:  
To live in such a way as to give up nothing  
Neither for the immortality that at times we can sense in advance,  
Neither for the blessed abundance of past lives.

\textsuperscript{18} Poetic form.
В дремучей скуче жизни бесполезной
Блюсти закон и ежедневный аут.
Работать, есть и спать почти над бедной —
Вот праведный и мужественный труд.

Жить полной волей, страстной и упражной,
В однородзы оловянных дней.
Ходить упруго, весело и прямо
Навстречу верной гибели своей.

Нет подвига достойнее и выше:
Так жить, чтоб ничего не отдавать
Ни за бессмертые, что порой предслышим,
Ни за прошедших жизней благодарь.

---

18 Poetic form.
PART TWO
XIII. Dedication

Glad tidings from a blissful height,
    Thou,
Light of joy in the gaping void,
    Thou,
My guide in the realm of dreams,\textsuperscript{19}
Take these poor pages,
Witnesses to my labor and purity,
    Thou!

\textsuperscript{19} Although technically it is singular, the translation is better suited, in English, to a plural form.
XIII. Посвящение

Благая весть с блаженной высоты,
Ты,
Свет радости в зиянии пустоты,
Ты,
Мой проводник на поприще мечты, 19
Прими вот эти бедные листы,
Свидетелей трудов и чистоты,
Ты!..
XIV. Eastern Dance

In answer to the sign - in the darkness of the fair,
A ring of interlaced hands broke apart,
And in the rising rumble of drums
A woman dancer entered into the impassioned circle.

Her shoulder and breast gradually entered the dance,
Accompanied by the music of harps, her foot searched for a ford,
Suddenly there was the call of a trumpet - and, her belly slowly
Joined the dance, trembling ever so slightly.

Oh, the rapture of slow rocking,
Oh the light step to the sound of distant whistling,
Oh, the music of unprecedented silences,
And -- suddenly -- a blow, and the splashes of flutes and zithers!

A storm. The madness of the infernal orchestra,
The peals of trumpets, the anxious loud cry of cymbals.
How the startled maestro rushes about.
But nevertheless the indomitable billow grows.

And the woman - fearless - engaged
In a voluptuous struggle with the orchestra.
Music beckoned her out of the darkness --
And the belly kept on shaking - obedient - to the trumpet.

---

20 The word адский has a literal meaning of "infernal/diabolical"; figurative meaning = hellish, intolerable.
21 The word вал has four separate meanings: 1) a billow or roller; 2) a bank or earthen wall; 3) a technical term meaning "shaft"; and 4) an economic term meaning "gross output".
XIV. Восточный танец

В ответ на знак — во мраке балагана
Расторгнуто кольцо сплетенных рук,
И в ропоте восставших барабанов
Танцовщица вступила в страстный круг.

Плечно и грудь вошли степенно в пляску,
В потоке арф нога искала брод,
Вдруг зов трубы — и, весь в легчайшей тряске,
Вошел в игру медлительный живот.

О, упоенье медленных качаний,
О, легкий шаг под отдаленный свист,
О, музыка неслыханных молчаний,
И — вдруг — удар, и брызги флейт и систр!

Гроза. Бесумье адского оркестра,
Раскаты труб, тревожный зык цимбала.
Как мечется испуганный маэстро,
Но все растет неукротимы вал.

И женщина — бесстрашная — вступила
С оркестром в сладострастную борьбу.
Ее из мрака музыка манила —
И шел живот — послушно — на трубу.

20 The word адский has a literal meaning of "infernal/diabolical"; figurative meaning = hellish, intolerable.
21 The word вал has four separate meanings: 1) a billow or roller; 2) a bank or earthen wall; 3) a technical term meaning "shaft"; and 4) an economic term meaning "gross output".

147
And the woman loved and desired –
And, mastering the tense dance,
She carried her ecstasy-filled body
Towards hundreds of scorching hot eyes.
Но женщина любила и хотела —
И, побеждая напряженный пляс,
Она несла восторженное тело
Навстречу сотням раскаленных глаз.
Oh, this hour, of dense and ancient torture:
To stand in the darkness, leaning against a theatrical decoration
To hide from myself my own hands,
Trembling from desire and anguish.

XV.

I was a speck of dust in the play of whirling worlds,
I barely was – in a semi-non-existence...
My soul was rocking in primordial indolence
Its visions without colors.\footnote{The word видение can mean "sight" or "vision" when the accent is placed on the first syllable of the word, and "vision" and "apparition" when the accent is placed on the second syllable of the word.}

I went, whirling about, through the void and chasms,
Through the sweetness of the primordial fire,
All illuminated by useless happiness,
Ringing out an irrepressible gladness.

But there, where - never beaten by the wind –
The soul grew in spaces, like grass,
Where obedient to my orbits,
Cheerful and needed words flowed,

Where silence blossomed exuding the fragrance of peace,
Came towards me and stirred my blood!
Out of the chaos and darkness of a thunderous night,
Uninvited hostile love.

It came to me mercilessly and coarsely,
To crush my circle, my verse, my fate.
And it burned my soul and singed my lips,
In order to increase with fiery salt my desire.
О, этот час густой и древней муки
Стой во тьме, у крашеной доски,
И прятать от себя свои же руки,
Дрожащие от жажды и тоски.

XV.

Я был пылинкою в игре мироzemений,
Я еле был — в полунебытении...
Душа качала в первобытной лени
Видения22 бесцветные свои.

Я шел, кружась, сквозь пустоту и бездны,
Сквозь сладость первозданного огня,
Весь осиянный счастьем бесполезным,
Неудержимой радостью звезенья.

Но там, где — ветром никогда не бита —
Душа росла в пространствах, как трава,
Где шли, моим покорные обритам,
Веселые и нужные слова,

Где тишина цвела, благоухая миром,
Пришла ко мне — и возмутила кровь! —
Из хаоса и тьмы грохочущего мира
Незванныя враждебная любовь.

Она пришла ко мне безжалостно и грубо
Сломать мой круг, мой сик, мою судьбу.
И душу обожгла, и опалила губы,
Чтоб солью огненной томить мою алчью.

22 The word видение can mean "sight" or "vision" when the accent is placed on the first syllable of the word, and "vision" and "apparition" when the accent is placed on the second syllable of the word.
It burst in there and started to whirl and rage,
Breathing shame, languor and anguish...
Beware you who dared to burst into
My harmonious equilibrium!

In the desert and the fire, towards poisoned wells,
As in the old days, you want to hurl me again,
But again - firm and proud, I am going to fight with you.
Love, fall down! Tremble, love!

Don't trust yourself. Avoid one-on-one combat!
See, here in this body - I humble, like feather grass --
There are treasures of verse, patience and stubbornness,
Which shall blast the rock face to dust.

Your palm is heavy - and I shall fall, perhaps,
But now23 I order you:
Don't listen - don't believe! -- tremble with mortal trembling,
When I, broken, shall shout, -- "I love you".

23 Obsolete word: ныне - (adv.) now, today
Вот ворвалась, пошла кружить и бесноваться,
Дыша стыдом, томленьем и тоской...
Остерегайся, ты, посмеявшая ворваться
В мой гармонический покой!

В пустыне и огне, к отравленным колодцам,
Как некогда, меня швырнуть ты хочешь вновь,
Но снова — тверд и горд, иду с тобой бороться.
Любовь, обрушься! Трепещи, любовь!

Не доверяй себе. Беги, единоборства!
Вот в этом теле — бедном, как ковыль —
Сокровища стихов, терпенья и упорства,
Которые скалу разрушают в пыль.

Тяжка твоя ладонь — и я паду, быть может,
Но ныне23 я тебе велю:
Не слушай — не поверя! — дрожи смертельной дрожью,
Когда я крикну, сломанный, "люблю."

---
23 Obsolete word: ныне - (adv.) now, today
.... Years were needed, vast, ancient years
Of psalms and curses, of triumphs, exaltations - and gloom,
Of splendid realms, of crops, of leprosy, of adversity,
Of victories, of lawlessness, of praise and savage criticism,

Years were needed, centuries of hopeless meanderings,
Needed were sour bread and bitter burning honey,
Dark ages of humiliating cringing, of prayers and sobbing,
The desert sun and a frightful exodus, 24

An excruciating path through fires and smoke of centuries
Eternal boredom, hunger, triumph and anguish,
In order that now, on the shining parquet floor of a salon
I could bow to you, smiling ever so slightly.

What sands have removed the distant encounter,
What centuries have separated us, wandering ones,
But now 25 we are together, we are side by side, and now
there is nothing
To fill up the desert with and to still the hunger of wide-open eyes.

And only your illumined name remained.
I want to feed my avaricious soul on it like bread.
And all I can do during my empty nights
Is to gratefully preserve my savage pain.

---

24 This word can mean "outcome", "issue", "end", but also "Exodus". Here the word is used to refer to the biblical Book of Exodus and Knut conveys both the meaning of exodus and desert.
25 Obsolete word: ныне - (adv.) now, today
XVI.

...Нужны были годы, огромные древние годы
Псалмов и проклятий, торжеств, ликований — и мглы,
Блистательных царств, урожаев, проказы, невзгоды,
Побед, беззаконий, хвалений и дикой сулы,
Нужны были годы, века безнадежных блужданий,
Прокислые хлебы и горький сжигающий мед,
Глухие века пресмыкания, молитв и рыданий,
Пустынное солнце и страшный пустынный исход,²⁴
Мучительный путь сквозь пожары и сымы столетий,
Извечная скука, алчба, торжество и тоска,
Затем чтоб терпеть на блестящем салонном паркете
Я мог поклониться тебе, улыбнувшись слегка.
Какие пески отдаляли далекую встречу,
Какие века разделяли блуждающих нас,
А ныне²⁵ мы вместе, мы рядом, и вот даже нечем
Засыпать пысыню и голод прaskрывшихся глаз.
И только осталось твое озаренное имя.
Как хлебом питаться им — жадную душу кормить,
И только осталось пустыми ночами моими
Звериную муку мою благодарно хранить.

²⁴ This word can mean "outcome", "issue", "end", but also "Exodus". Here the word is used to refer to the biblical Book of Exodus and Knut conveys both the meaning of exodus and desert.
²⁵ Obsolete word: ныне- (adv.) now, today
To quietly pay with this gratifying and indigent life,
For the tenderness - of your shoulders - weary with love,
For the right to bring you to my hearth,
For the clandestine right: to embrace and to lie down with you.
Спокойно платить этой жизнью, отрадной и нищей,
За нежность твоих — утомленных любовью — плеч,
За право тебя приводить на мое пепелище,
За тайное право: с тобою обнятьсь и лечь.
XVII.

Oh, the robust thrill: not yet in love,
Already to betray oneself for the antediluvian joy.

Not yet touching her hand, to celebrate already --
Anticipating the set table and a meal and friendship and a bed...

Oh, final plenitude: without saying a word
To look at your beautiful -- empty -- eyes that reflect the desert.

XVIII.

Two eyes - two windows open to the triumphant air!
For many years I have begged You for them!
Two tidings of wings\(^\text{26}\), of miracles and stars,
Two promises of joy and strength.

Two eyes - two windows, flung wide open,
Into realms of an incredible plenitude.
Two doors leading to a purifying happiness -
To the magic of paradisical nudity.

Two eyes - two lands - two joyful spheres
Of shameless and triumphant love,
Two righteous rays, two ardent signs of faith,
Twice stated: Live!

\(^{26}\text{This is the poetic form of the word.}\)
XVII.

О, упоенье крепкое: еще не полюбя,
За радость допотопную уже предать себя.

Руки еще не трогая, уже торжествовать —
Предвидеть стол, и трапезу, и дружбу, и кровать...

0, полнота последняя: ни слова не сказав,
Смотреть в твои прекрасные — пустынные — глаза.

XVIII.

Два глаза — два окна в победоносный воздух!
Я много лет их у Тебя просил!
Две вести о крылах,26 о чудесах и звездах,
Два обещанья радости и сил.

Два глаза — два окна, распахнутые настежь
В края невероятной полноты.
Две двери в очистительное счастье —
В очарованье райской наготы.

26 This is the poetic form of the word.
XIX.

Away,
With my wild life, my strange affairs and my many coffins.
I need no one, and you I do not wish to aid.
Presently, in me, the beloved Name abides.
Lord, teach me to surmount my happiness!

I am rejecting avarice, abasement, pity and coldness!
Now the joy of desperate years is open to me.
The vault of the heavens is shaken and split by my burdensome name.
By my light name, the poor world is inspired and warmed.

Heaven, shine or thunder - I laugh at your verdict!
Earth, disappear from under my feet -- I shall remain amongst the irate heights.
My luminous Name, in the midst of a frenzied pack of clouds,
Shall enlighten me in triumph, shall establish me in the desert,
lift me up.

Much beloved,
You,
Forgive me that I dared to sanctify
My poor verses by your shadow.

XX.

Lightest of beings, you have fallen onto my house
My affairs and my days, like an overwhelming burden.
Oh, meeting of meetings - I learnt for the first time
The law of the ancient love trap.

---

Poetic instrumental form of pronoun "you" (Second p. singular).
XIX.

Прочь,
С дикой жизнью своею, с делами, с гробами своими.
Мне не нужен никто, а вам не хочу я помочь.
Ныне во мне пребывает любимое Имя.
Господи, научи счастье мое превозмочь!

Я отвергаю алчву, унижение, жалость и холод!
Ныне открыта мне радость отчаянных лет.
Именем трудным моим свод небес мотырен и расколот.
Именем легким моим бедный мир окрылен и цогрет.

Небо, сияй иль греми — я смеюсь над твоим приговором!
Земля, уходи из-под ног — я останусь среди гневных высот.
Светоносное Имя мое, среди яростной облачной своры,
Меня озарит торжеством, утвердит в пустоте, вознесет.

Многолюбимая,
Ты,
Прости, что убогие строки
Тенью твою27 я ныне посмел осветить.

XX.

Легчайшая, ты непосильным грузом
Легла на дом, дела мои — и дни.
О, встреча встреча — мной был впервые узнан
Закон любовной древней западни.

27 Poetic instrumental form of pronoun "you" (Second p. singular).
And I set off, I dashed off -- and leg-less!
With closed - already useless - eyes,
Thither, from where there's no road for the living
Into primordialness, without a path back.

Oh, Lord, what illumination!
Oh, Lord torture me, compel me --
I shall accept sin, I shall accept expiation,
But allow me to listen to this pain.

XXI.

Her eyes grew intoxicated: "demand, torment"...
And her arms waited for my insatiable hands.
But I didn't quiver before28 her powerful supplication,
Invincible, calm, strict and taut.

What is worthier, purer and better than these minutes?
To withstand -- and in spite of happiness,
To remain standing, to turn deaf and dumb and to torment silently
Those bare doomed eyes.30

28 Obsolete verb: принимать/приять – приемлю, (имать – емлю) – The verb is no longer used in the infinitive and past tense forms. The imperfective form used here, along with its perfective counterpart has a modern version in the verb "принять". The verb in both cases means to “take” to accept. Knut’s use of this obsolete term here emphasizes the spiritual/biblical quality of this poem, and indeed, of the entire work, Vtoria kniga.
29 Пред is a poetic form of перед, "in front of", "before".
30 The word used in the Russian text is not "eyes" but the pupils of the eyes. Since "pupils" might sound odd in English, I translated "глаза" as "eyes." The last poem in Blok’s cycle "Black Blood", "Черная крепь" is similar to this poem. See Blok’s poem , "Над лучшим созданием Божим "(from the collection "Страшный мир " (1909-1916). In both poems, the rejection of a woman’s passion is presented in similar terms.
И я пошел, я ринулся — безногий!
Закрыв — уже ненужные — глаза,
Туда, откуда нет живым дороги —
В первоначальность, без пути назад.

О, Господи, какое просветление!
О, Господи пытай меня, неволь —
Приемлю 28 грех, приемлю искупленье,
Но дай еще послушать эту боль.

XXI.

Ее глаза хмелели требуй, мучай...
И руки ждали ненасытных рук.
Но я не дрогнул пред 29 мольбой могучей,
Непобедим, спокоен, строг и туг.

Что тех минут достойней, чище, лучше?
Противостать — и, счастно вопреки,
Стоять, глухонеметь и молча мучить
Нагие обреченные эрачки. 30

28 Obsolete verb: принимать/приять — приемлю, (имать — емлю) — The verb is no longer used in the infinitive and past tense forms. The imperfective form used here, along with its perfective counterpart has a modern version in the verb "принять". The verb in both cases means to "take" to accept. Knut's use of this obsolete term here emphasizes the spiritual/biblical quality of this poem, and indeed, of the entire work, Vtoraja kniga.
29 Пред is a poetic form of перед., "in front of", "before".
30 The word used in the Russian text is not "eyes" but the pupils of the eyes. Since "pupils" might sound odd in English, I translated "эрачки" as "eyes." The last poem in Blok's cycle "Black Blood", "Черная кровь" is similar to this poem. See Blok's poem, "Над лучшим созданием Божьим" (from the collection "Страшный мир") (1909-1916). In both poems, the rejection of a woman's passion is presented in similar terms.
XXII.

To hope for unhoped for 31 touches!
To see, without looking, those same eyes!
To give oneself up to them, to the very end of total oblivion,32
To go into them without leaving oneself a chance to return.

To toss into the game my wild body!
To tumble down - and quicken again33 - and to rise, holding one's breath... --
Did you really fly to earth for that reason --
In your unique flight - my soul?

No, I will not recline long at my beloved's heart!
I lie at her alluring feet only
So that from the love game - the unendurable love game--
I again may rise up34 victorious.

And purifying myself of my mundane affairs and desires,
Again I shall set off -- for greater labors --
Into the coldness and magnificence of silence --
To struggle with a lump of verbal ore.

---

31 My primary attempt is to recapture the Russian "неожиданных".
32 This word also has an obsolete meaning of "unconsciousness", "drowsiness".
33 Obsolete verb: прыгнуть - to jump aside. However in this case, this is a subtle, sexual meaning where the speaker is 'renewed', thus, the traditional meaning of "to jump aside" does not apply.
34 Obsolete verb: восстать - to rise up (imperfective form).
XXII.

Часть нечаянных прикосновений!
Видеть, не глядя, все те же глаза!
Им предаваться до тла, до забвенья,
В них уходить без возврата назад!

Бросить в игру однako тело!
Рухнуть и прянутие — и стать, не дыша... —
Разве затем ты на землю летела —
В неповторимом полете — душа?

Нет, я недолго у сердца любимой!
Я лишь затем у заманчивых ног,
Чтоб из любовной игры — нестерпимой! —
Снова восстать победителем мог.

И очищаясь от дел и желаний,
Вновь ухожу — на большие труды —
В холод и великолепье молчанья —
Биться над глубой словесной руды.

31 My primary attempt is to recapture the Russian "нечаяньных".
32 This word also has an obsolete meaning of "unconsciousness", "drowsiness".
33 Obsolete verb: прянутие - to jump aside. However in this case, this is a subtle, sexual
meaning where the speaker is 'renewed'; thus, the traditional meaning of "to jump aside"
does not apply.
34 Obsolete verb: восстать - to rise up (imperfective form).
XXIII. "The Ark"³⁵

For many days I tarred it,
For nights on end I caulked cracks,
For many nights I bore stones, earth and silt
Shovel by the shovel, in darkness.

And after long days of labor
The promised times came --
And the wild water shot up over
The ark, clumsy and tall.

The ark floats - and against its sides
The cries of the world knock in vain.
O, the tender singing of ether
In the realms of unearthly heights.

Passing over submerged stones
Of human cupidity, dreams and affairs,
I suddenly shall find out, how light are to me
My soul -- and my lot.

We float, we sing like a harmonious herd --
Guttural roars, and chirping, and crying resound! --
And a big and gentle old man
Awaits us beyond the Ararat garden.³⁶

³⁵ This lengthy (26 verse) poem is a tribute to the story of Noah's ark, which is found in
Genesis, Chapters 6-10. The word: קֹבֵּר means "ark or shrine".
³⁶ The name refers to Mt. Ararat, the location where Noah's ark is said to have landed.
(Genesis 8:4). "...so that in the seventh month, on the seventeenth of the month, the ark
came to rest on the mountains of Ararat."
XXIII. Ковчег

1.

Я много дней его смолил,  
Ночами щели конопатил,  
Ночами камни, землю, ил  
Носил в потемках по лопате.

И после долгих дней труда  
Пришли обещанные сроки —  
И взмыла дикая вода  
Ковчег, уклюжий и высокий.

Ковчег плывает — и о борты  
Напрасно бьются крики мира.  
О, пенье нежное эфира  
В краях нездешей высоты.

Подводные миная камни  
Людской корысти, снов и дел,  
Я вдруг узнаю, как легка мне  
Моя душа — и мой удел.

Плываем, поем согласным стадом —  
Утробный рык, и писк, и крик! —  
Нас ждет за Араратским садом  
Большой и ласковый старик.

---

35 This lengthy (26 verse) poem is a tribute to the story of Noah's ark, which is found in Genesis, Chapters 6-10. The word: ковчег means "ark or shrine".
36 The name refers to Mt. Ararat, the location where Noah's ark is said to have landed. (Genesis 8:4). "...so that in the seventh month, on the seventeenth of the month, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat."
And not for you, and not for the sake of the rhyme
(That's your game, earthly scum!)
We shall avoid the reef of suffering, 37
Having overcome life and death.

What are to me the burns of the wind, of sultriness!
I smell roses and almonds...
I foresee Noah standing at the paradisical gates. 38
He narrows his gaze, he looks into the distance.

I float towards you, I float, old friend,
Shepherd of wild and gentle souls.
What wines will you concoct for the guest
To reward him for the wind, the fear and the darkness?

Oh, blessed friend and my contemporary,
Any hardship is easy for me to bear,
But let your messenger fly hither more quickly --
Carrying the green leaf of the little dove.

2.

Oh, you should at least in a dream see such an expanse!
My ark followed angel traces.
Beneath it, the sky rocked and roared,
Above it, water thundered and rushed forward.

37 Rhyming two words, ("риф мы") with one ("рифы") Knut demonstrates a futurist tendency. In the poem "On the Seine", he breaks up the name "Rachel" to rhyme with the end of the previous line in a 2 line stanza. "Домой, к стихям! Мой вечер не стихий ль?/ Ран -- жиль!"
38 Obsolete, Poetic word: врет- (no sing.) means gates. The contemporary form is ворота.
И не для вас, и не для рифмы (Твоя игра, земная смерть!)
Страдания избегнем риф мы,  
Преодолев живот и смерть.

Что мне ожоги ветра, эноя!
Я слышу розы и миндаль...
И райских врат предвкужу Ноя.
Он щурит глаз, он смотрит в даль.

Плыву к тебе, плыву, товарищ,
Звериных, милых душ пастух.
Какие вина гостю сваришь
За ветер, страх и темноту?

О, друг блаженный и ровесник,
Мне тяжесть всякая легка,
Но пусть скорей летит твой вестник —
Листок зеленый голубка.

2.

Такую даль увидеть вам во сне бы!
Ковчег мой шел по ангельским следам.
Под ним качалось и ревело небо,
Над ним гремела и неслась вода.

37 Rhyming two words, ("риф мь") with one ("риф мы") Knut demonstrates a futurist tendency. In the poem "On the Seine", he breaks up the name "Rachel" to rhyme with the end of the previous line in a 2 line stanza. " Домой, к стихам! Мой вечер не стихий?""  
38 Obsolete, Poetic word: врет- (no sing.) means gates. The contemporary form is ворота.
The orchestra of human revelries still droned on,
The children of the poor still were growing thin,
A bell beat, carousels spun around,
And from the struggle, the alcove still trembled,
Еще гудел оркестр людских веселий,
Еще худели дети бедняков,
Бил колокол, кружились карусели,
И от борьбы еще дрожал альков,
When the avenging chasms opened wide,
And the perishing earth quivered in terror!
And rain gushed forth, and iron hail burst out!
And the wind was whirling and stirring up dust.

[Then] wild beasts cried out and people roared,
Homes and mountains collapsed....
Where -- is the memory of friendship, of beloved legs and breasts!
Oh, this howl! Oh, this lament and darkness.

You were heavy, my fruitful lot --
The ark stood, it waited amidst mountains and crags,
And see -- now it moves in the implacable sky,
And tears into shreds the thunder and clouds.

3.

I bless the breath of the olive-tree.
The air was already radiant, drunk with wine,
And heavenly valleys swam towards us,
When the dove knocked at the window.

The mountain swayed - and from angels' wings
The lightest of aromas wafted over the mountain,
And hands tugged at -- and opened wide
The ark, beneath which arose Ararat.  

And now I shall go out to long-haired Noah.
What does it matter - the grief and ashes of recent separations!
Oh, my tall brother. I walk towards him -- and after me
Come the eagle, the camel, the rhinoceros and the spider...

39 Knut is elliptic but this syntactic structure is felt tying the two stanzas together.
40 Alternate plural form ending.
41 See Genesis 8:4
Когда разверзлись мстительные безды
И гибущая дрогнула земля!
И хлынул дождь, и гранул град железный,
И ветер выл, взрываясь и пыля.

Кричали эвери и ревели люди,
Обрушились горы и дома...
Где — память дружб, любимых ног и грудей!
0, этот вой! 0, этот плач и тьма.

Ты тяжек был, мой плодотворный жребий —
Ковчег стоял, он ждал средь гор и скал,
И вот — идет в неумолимом небе,
И в ключья свет грома и облака.

3.
Благословляя дыханье маслины.
Уж воздух сиял, напоенный вином,
И горные к нам подплывали долины,
Когда голубок постучался в окно.

Качалась гора — и от ангельских крыльев
Легчайший летел над горой аромат,
И руки рванули — и настежь открыли
Ковчег, под которым восстал Арарат.41

И вот выхожу к многовласому Ною.
Что — горе и пепел недавних разлук!
0, брат мой высокий. Иду — и за мною
Орел и верблюд, носорог и паук...

39 Knut is elliptic but this syntactic structure is felt tying the two stanzas together.
40 Alternate plural form ending.
41 See Genesis 8:4
Oh, dear charms of a hard-earned paradise.  
A canopy\textsuperscript{42} of the most delicate ether sways about. 
I stroll leisurely round the paradisical garden -- 
With bare feet on heavenly dew...

We seek, we call - eh, Lord, where art Thou?  
And the cry is like a song in a blissful breast.  
And white arms are lifted up\textsuperscript{43} in the ether,  
And an angel flies above us and keeps an eye on us.

4.

Suddenly the air began to sparkle, spreading floating colors, 
And there blazed forth -- His eyes!  
Behind a slender angel, He went leisurely.  
And there - He stood. And there - He said:

"--Because you saved, for my righteous settlements  
Flocks of hope and shoals of words,  
Because from destruction and indolence  
Your oar saved my herds,

"-- Because from impassable quagmires and abysses you brought out  
And led your ark in bitter waters,  
Because you avoided deception and islands of temptation,  
And went towards the light and did not ask -- why;

\textsuperscript{42} Obsolete, poetic word: сень- is an obsolete word with a poetic flavor.  
\textsuperscript{43} Obsolete verb: воздеть- used only in the phrase "to lift up one's hands", "воздеть руки"
0, милые прелести трудного рай.
Нежнейших эфиров колышется сень.\textsuperscript{42}
По райскому саду неспешно гуляю —
Босыми стопами по райской розе...

Мы ищем, мы кличем — эй, Господи, где Ты?
И крик — будто песня в счастливой груди.
И белые руки в эфирах воздеты,\textsuperscript{43}
И ангел над нами летит и глядит.

4.

Вдруг воздух заиграл, колебля переливы,
И полыхнул — Его глаза!
За стройным ангелом Он шел неторопливо.
И вот — Он стал. И вот — сказал:

— За то, что ты спасал для праведных селений
Стада надежд и стай слов,
Что тауны Мой от гибели и лени
Твое спасло — твое — весело,

— Что из трясин и бездн ты вывел непролазных
И в горьких водах вел ковчег,
Что огibal обман и острова соблазнов,
И шел на свет, и не спросил — зачем

\textsuperscript{42} Obsolete, poetic word: сень is an obsolete word with a poetic flavor.
\textsuperscript{43} Obsolete verb: воздеть used only in the phrase "to lift up one's hands", "воздеть руки"
"--Because you cultivated a wonderful ear of corn in the midst of prickly plants, under heavy rains
Because you nourished them herd after herd...
And in each rustling watched over and listened to the voice,
Which always soared above you;

"--Because the thunder of swift-flowing\textsuperscript{44} water was defeated
By your strong hand --
I say: Enter onto the roses of the paradisical foliage,\textsuperscript{45}
And lie down, and drink and savor peace.

-- I saw -- lofty was your work.
Look at the Scales of Justice:
You were persistent and firm in the struggle of maelstroms,
I welcome you, My son!"

... And Noah smiled, and happiness grew ripe in the garden
The hours of bliss and silence!
And a great light flowed, and everything blossomed and sang:
I welcome you, My son."

\textsuperscript{44}Obsolete, Poetic word: быстроскачущий - means swift-flowing.
\textsuperscript{45}Obsolete, Poetic word: куза - (l) - means tent, hut (in obsolete form). Also foliage or crest of trees. It also is used in the phrase "Feast of Tabernacles", a Jewish religious feast "праздник кущей". Clearly the image Knut uses hear indicates both meanings - the garden of paradise as being both filled with foliage of plants (i.e. roses) and also being a tent, a symbol of welcoming and home.
– Что в тернях, в дождах растил ты чудный колос,
Что им питал стада, стада...
И в каждом шелесте терег и слушал голос,
Что реял над тобой всегда;

– Что был напрасен гром воды быстротекущей
Пред крепкою твоей рукой –
Я говорю: взойди на розы райских кущей,
И ляг, и пей, вкушая покой.

– Я видел – высока была твоя работа.
Взгляни на Судные весы:
Ты был упрям и тверд в борьбе водоворотов,
Приветствую тебя, Мой сын!" 

...И улыбался Ной, и счастье в кущах спело –
Бла женств и тишины часы!
И плыл великий свет, и все цвело и пело:
"Приветствую тебя, Мой сын."

---

44 Obsolete, Poetic word: быстротекущий - means swift-flowing.
45 Obsolete, Poetic word: куща - (f) - means tent, hut (in obsolete form). Also foliage or crest of trees. It also is used in the phrase "Feast of Tabernacles", a Jewish religious feast "праздник кущей". Clearly the image Knut uses hear indicates both meanings - the garden of paradise as being both filled with foliage of plants (i.e. roses) and also being a tent, a symbol of welcoming and home.
I look — and do not see.
I speak — and do not hear.
My feet move, but I — I am motionless.

Mourn then for your love!
Somewhere winds sway
The reddish field, the russet bliss of rye!

Where is the laughter of that little hut —
The happy and rich dream —
Those traces, fruits, that dew?...

I was simpler than a birdie,
I warmed my heels, strong-legged —
I sang in the mountains and whistled among the woods,

I drove deer in the tundra,
I went along scorched villages,\(^46\)
I broke ice\(^47\) — and furled sails!...

...O light of blessed indolence.
I am incorporeal and gay.
Solitude, stand guard!

\(^46\) Obsolete term.
\(^47\) Although English uses a singular collective term for "ice", the Russian used by Knut in this line is a plural form.
XXIV.

Гляжу — и не вижу.
Говорю — и не слышу.
Ноги ходят, а я — недвижим.

Гурсти о любви же!
Где-то ветры лошуют
Рыжий строй, радость рыжую ржи.

Где смех той лачужки —
Сон счастливый и многий —
Те следы, те плоды, та роса?..

Был проще пичужки,
Пятки грец, крепконогий —
Пел в горах и свистал по лесам,

Гнал в тундре оления,
Шел по выжженным весям,
Льды ломал — и крепил паруса!..

...Свет благостной лени.
Я бесплотен и весел.
Одиночество, стой на часах!

---

46 Obsolete term.
47 Although English uses a singular collective term for "ice", the Russian used by Knut in this line is a plural form.
XXV.

I give back all gaiety - and I am glad —
For the weak sound of unearthly strings and laughter,
For the echo flying from darkness to darkness — 48
Cast backwards and forwards hundreds of times.

At the midnight hour I watch over the expanse.
I accumulate a catch that quivers in the lunar light...
Flow into me, mysterious rapture!
I await you, I stand like a hungry net!

What are tears, joy and grief to me!
What are dust and the noise of terrestrial delight49 to me!
My soul, say farewell - - and cast off
To the quietest edge of unshakable coolness!

The quiet ocean flows and splashes
And bewitches50 the cold shores...
I hear the song of transient lands
That rivulets of waters51 graciously carried to me.

I sense impossible worlds - -
And I go, happy and obedient,
To where there are signs of a majestic game - -
Where silver pearls are rocking.

48 In this line, the complex metaphor points to "rhyming".
49 Obsolete term: "услада" - means joy, delight, enjoyment.
50 Obsolete verb: "чаровать" (impf.) - means to bewitch, charm.
51 Obsolete, poetic term: "струя" (f) - This word has three meanings: a) jet, spurt, stream, current; b) spirit; c) obs., poetic - water. In combination with the verb "выплескивать" (meaning to splash out), the image is one of spurts of water coming out from the quiet ocean.
Oh, Lord, utter to me: dissolve!
And I shall sink into darkness, thankful and trusting.
How sweet the murmur of musical flocks
That splash over Your green shore!
XXV.

Я все бессонно отдаю — и рад —
За слабый эхо нездешних струн и смеха,
За переброшенное сотни крат —
Из тьмы во тьму летающее эхо.48

В полночь час я стерегу простор.
Коплю улов, дрожащий в лунном свете...
Плыви в меня, таинственный восторг!
Я жду тебя, стою голодной сетью!

На что мне — слезы, радость и печаль!
На что мне пыль и шум земной услады!49
Душа моя, проницай — и отчая
В тишиший край незыблемой прохлады!

Течет и плеет тихий океан
И берега холодные чарует...50
Я слышу песню мимолетных стран,
Что благосклонно выплеснули струи.51

Я слышу невозможные миры —
И я иду, счастливый и покорный,
Туда, где — знаки высшений игры —
Качаются серебряные зерна.

48 In this line, the complex metaphor points to "rhyming".
49 Obsolete term: "услада" - means joy, delight, enjoyment.
50 Obsolete verb: "чаровать" (impf.) - means to bewitch, charm.
51 Obsolete, poetic term: "струя" (f) - This word has three meanings: a) jet, spurt, stream, current; b) spirit; c) obs., poetic - water. In combination with the verb "выплескивать",(meaning to splash out), the image is one of spurs of water coming out from the quiet ocean.
О, Господи, промолви мне: растай! —
И кану в тьмы, благодаря и веря.
Как сладок ропот музыкальных стай,
Что плещутся о Твой зеленый берег!
XXVI. Silence

1.
Shining sand is at my dusty feet.
Non-existence drones with vast silence. 52
Devastated, blessed and solitary,
I stand and listen -- in dust and sultriness.

Singed by insatiable sleep,
My soul leads me into the fire and salt of the desert.
The mirage of a sleepy land arises
A land where all is immobile, blessed and blue.

.... Eternity began to resound to me, like a string,
The severe breathing of seven heavens...

My soul sings like a nomad in the desert of sleep,
Obedient to the swaying of my protuberances.

2.

Centuries lay on the ripening sand.
There is no one, there is nothing with me.
All voices have remained in the distance.
I consign myself to oblivion and sultriness.

Sand murmurs. I swim, my dutiful raft
Goes along spurts of inaudible purling.
I sense growth -- and I look forward to its fruit:
A tight, weighty silence.

52 Old, poetic ending "-οιο" is used here, for the instrumental ending.
XXVI. ТИШИНА

1.
Сияющий песок у запыленных ног.
Гудит небытие огромной тишиною. 52
Опустошен, блажен и одинок,
Стою и слушаю — в пыли и эне.

Неутолимым сном опалена,
Душа ведет меня в огонь и соль пустыни.
Встает миражем сонная страна,
Где все недвижно, благостно и сине.

... Мне вечность зазвучала, как струна,
Семи небес суровое дыханье...

Душа кочевником поет в пустыне сна,
Моих горбов покорна колыханью.

2.
Лежат века на зреющем песке.
Нет никого, нет ничего со мною.
Все голоса остались вдалеке.
Я предаюсь забвению и эною.

Журчит песок. Плыву, послушный плот,
По струям нерассыпанных журчаний.
Я слышу рост — и предвкушаю плод:
Тугое, полновесное молчанье.

52 Old, poetic ending "-ою" is used here, for the instrumental ending.
But you, my soul, you slumber on a raft
And you see the intoxicating distances —
The blue depth and void
That you and I guessed in advance long ago.

Sand murmurs. And along a wave of warmth
I swim, I float - to a final abode.
I have traversed the seas of good and evil,
Holding onto the oar with a stubborn hand.

But an old dream bars my way,
And I see with frightened eyes,
A familiar alluring breast,
The bygone struggles with tender enemies...

A final - merry - struggle,
And the weight of difficult days and thoughts is thrown off.

Play, thunder, victorious trumpet.
Resound, exultantly, glorifying sweet\textsuperscript{53} thoughtlessness.

\textsuperscript{53} Obsolete term: "сладостный" means "sweet, delightful".
А ты, душа, ты дремлеши на плоту
И видишь упоительные дали —
Ту голубой глубь и пустоту,
Что мы с тобой давно предугадали.

Журчит песок. И по волне тепла
Плыву, плыву — в последние покой.
Я переплыл моря добра и эха,
Держа весло упорно рукою.

Но старый сон мне преграждает путь,
И вижу устрашенными глазами
Знакомую заманчивую грудь,
Былые схватки с нежными врагами...

Последняя — веселая — борьба,
И сброшен груз — тяжелых дней и мыслей.

Играй, греми, победная труба.
Гуди, ликуй о сладостном безмыслии.

53 Obsolete term: "сладостный" means "sweet, delightful".
XXVII.

An empty desert, light, tranquil and simple,
Streams around me, drowning and flooding everything.\textsuperscript{54}
My soul is tense,
With a festive final fullness. \textsuperscript{55}

Gardens blossoming with edenic flowers float by,
An indistinct melody is audible beforehand,
And thus, there is no blood, but a nameless haze
That runs inside me, shining, fragrant.

The earth rocks slightly in dreary dreams,
In the quietest cloud of airless desert.
Non-intoxicating are the warmth and silence,
Humble are the affairs of simple-hearted nature.

XXVIII.

..... The long drawn-out sound of sand
And the bitter sultriness of the promised land...
May my foot(step) be light to you,
Oh, rumbling bones of caravans that once passed by.

Creative\textsuperscript{56} hand, give your blessing.
Bless once\textsuperscript{57} and twice --
I have come unto the end, without spilling
Love, humility and thirst.

\textsuperscript{54} The term "заливать", in the imperfective form means both "to lie, to tell lies" (colloquial meaning) and also "to flood, inunctade, pour (over), spill (on), to quench/extinguish". This latter term has the perfective form of "заливать". Given the context, I used the non-colloquial form of flooding.

\textsuperscript{55} Attempt at matching alliteration, as Knut uses "последней полнотой" here.

\textsuperscript{56} The verb "творить" also has a secondary, obsolete meaning, "to knead".

\textsuperscript{57} Obsolete term: (adv).- "once".
XXVII.

Пустынный свет, спокойный и простой,
Течет вокруг, топя и заливая.54
Торжественной последней полнотой55
Напряжена душа полуживая.

Плывут первоцветущие сады,
Предслышится мелодия глухая,
И вот не кровь, но безымянный дым
Бежит во мне, светясь, благоухая.

Земля покачивается в убогих снах,
В тишайшем облаке пустыни безвоздушной.
Неупиваемы тепло и тишина,
Смиренье дел природы простодушной.

XXVIII.

... Протяжный звон песка
И горький зной земли обетованной...
Да будет вам стопа моя легка,
О, кости гулкие прошедших караванов.

Благослови, трорящая56 рука.
Благослови единожды57 и дважды —
Я до конца дошел, не расплескав
Любви, смирения и жажды.

---

54 The term "заливать", in the imperfective form means both "to lie, to tell lies" (colloquial meaning) and also "to flood, inunodate, pour (over), spill (on), to quench/extinguish". This latter term has the perfective form of "заливать". Given the context, I used the non-colloquial form of flooding.
55 Attempt at matching alliteration, as Knut uses "последней полнотой" here.
56 The verb "творить" also has a secondary, obsolete meaning, "to knead".
57 Obsolete term: (adv).- "once".
XXIX.

How can I tell how, during that spacious night, I
Went into the void - the globe of Earth was revolving,
And how can I tell that one could hear how the earthly
scorching soul
Was breaking and churning?

An invisible bird cried in the night,
And the earth went on - obedient, barely ringing...
And it seemed to me: it was doomed to sail betwixt stars,
to spin around,
So as to carry-spin me to light and darkness.

How can I tell, how air and peace wearied me
During that simple night?
I stood up, having forgotten what the Master wants,
And I was sad, and breathed anguish.

---

58 Although in instrumental form, I turned this around, as it sounded better.
XXIX.

Как рассказать, что той просторной ночью
Шел в пустоте — земной катился шар,
И слышалось, как рвется и клохчет
Земная раскаленная душа?

Кричала в ночь невидимая птица,
И шла земля — покорно, чуть звена...
И мне почудилось: ей плыть меж звезд, кружиться,
Чтоб в свет и тьму нести-кружить меня.

Как рассказать, что той простою ночью
Меня томили воздух и покой?
Стоял, забыв — чего Хозяин хочет,
И был печален, и дышал тоской.

58 Although in instrumental form, I turned this around, as it sounded better.
XXX.
To think only, how many people
We shall not meet in this life - -
Because of our laziness, because of our coarseness,
Because of nouns, verbs and interjections.

And how much of them, that at this hour
God knows where - perhaps near at hand, - -
Are warmed by the same joy as we are
And disturbed by the same difficult word.

My unknown accomplices,
Perhaps, at this very moment you perish next to me
On the same passionate path
Without faith and hope to a reward!

And there, sometime, in other fields,
In an invisible and wise light,
We shall meet strangers of terrestrial cities
Unexpectedly and gratefully.

And only then, from a great height
Inpertubedly peering down on earth,
We shall recognize lanes and bridges
And an urban, familiar puny little garden...

And we shall comprehend at that amicable hour,
We shall recognize with belated regret,
That on lonely nights time and again
One and the same nocturnal street has led us...
XXX.
Подумать только, сколько есть людей,
Которых в этой жизни мы не встретим —
По ленности, по грубости своей,
Из-за имен, глаголов, междометий.

И сколько их, которых в этот час
Бог знает где — поблизости, быть может,—
Такая ж греет радость, что и нас,
И то же слово трудное тревожит.

Сообщники безвестные мои,
Быть может, вы сейчас со мною рядом
На том же страстном гибнете пути
Без веры и надежды и награду!

И вот, когда-нибудь, в полях иных,
В непоказуемом премудром свете,
Мы неизвестных городов земных
Нечаянно и благодарно встретим.

И лишь тогда, с великой высоты
На мир земной невозмутимо глядя,
Узнаем переулки и мосты
И городской знакомый чайный садик...

И мы поймем в тот дружелюбный час,
Мы с поздним сожалением узнаем,
Что в ночи одинокие не раз
Одна вела нас улица ночной...

193
When each one of us was devastated and lonely --
Irreparably, sorrowfully,
An invisible brother (this only God saw!)
Pined away with the same emptiness and thirst.
Когда опустошен и одинок —
Непоправимо, горестно — был каждый,
Незримый брат (то видел только Бог!)
Томился той же пустотой и жаждой.
XXXI. "Ordeal"59

I busied myself with transitory affairs
And writhed in the trembling of vain minutes,
When the fluttering of wings surrounded me
And thrice was sounded: "Dovid Knut".

Oh shame! In the darkness leg wrestled with leg,
My dearest one was playing with me,
When the stern voice called me
And proclaimed to me: "My son, it is I!"

Abandon this world! I have decreed otherwise for you.
Abandon your cares of unworthy matters,
Give thanks: another lot has been appointed for you —
A lofty, blessed and manly lot.

- - Take in your arms the rubbish of your terrestrial home,
All your happiness, all your grief,
All by which blind lives, is comforted by, is guided by —
And cast it into hells 60 and paradises.

59 The title of this poem, "Ordeal", in addition to referring to the Biblical tale of Abraham and Issac, also addresses the larger religious issue Man's obligation to obey God. The biblical tale of Abraham and Issac is the Torah portion for one of the most holy days in Judaism, Rosh Hashanah. As the beginning of the "Days of Awe" or the High Holy Days, the meaning of addressing this particular passage on Rosh Hashanah is to remind Jews that it is the willingness to obey all that God says (i.e. Abraham's willingness to perform human sacrifice of his beloved son, even though such sacrifices were prohibited by Judaism). Traditionally it is believed that the Book of Life is opened on this day, and that each year, the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is the period when God examines each soul and notes what will happen over the next year to him or her. By addressing this important passage in this poem, Knut reflects not just the issue of "chesbon hanafesh", the examined life, but also continues a poem from his 1925 work, "Submissiveness", which addresses the same issue of Man's relationship and need to submit to God.

60 A place mentioned in religious mythology. (Also known as hell).
XXXI. "Испытание"59

1.
Я занимался бренными делами
И бился в дрожи суетных минут,
Когда меня овеяло крылами
И трижды прорубило Довид Кнут.

0, стыд! Во тьме нога с ногой боролась,
Со мной играла милая моя,
Когда позвал меня суровый голос
И возвестил мне Сын мой, это — Я.

— Оставь сей мир! Мной суждено иначе.
Оставь заботы недостойных дел,
Благодары иной тебе назначен
Возвышенный, благой, мужской удел.

— Возьми в охапку хлам земного дома,
Все радости, все горести твои,
Все, чем жива, утешена, ведома
Слепая жизнь — в геенне60 и раи.

59 The title of this poem, "Ordeal", in addition to referring to the Biblical tale of Abraham and Issac, also addresses the larger religious issue Man's obligation to obey God. The biblical tale of Abraham and Issac is the Torah portion for one of the most holy days in Judaism, Rosh Hashanah. As the beginning of the "Days of Awe" or the High Holy Days, the meaning of addressing this particular passage on Rosh Hashanah is to remind Jews that it is the willingness to obey all that God says (i.e. Abraham's willingness to perform human sacrifice of his beloved son, even though such sacrifices were prohibited by Judaism). Traditionally it is believed that the Book of Life is opened on this day, and that each year, the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is the period when God examines each soul and notes what will happen over the next year to him or her. By addressing this important passage in this poem, Knut reflects not just the issue of "chesbon hanafesh", the examined life, but also continues a poem from his 1925 work, "Submissiveness", which addresses the same issue of Man's relationship and need to submit to God.

60 A place mentioned in religious mythology. (Also known as hell).
- - Lift the weight with fearless hands,
Take with you a knife, a firestone\(^61\), firewood\(^62\)
And bear them to the sacrificial stones,
Where there is dust\(^63\) and salt, where grass is scorched...

- - There all that now amuses you in vain,
All the scanty affairs of your earth,
Set fire to with flaming wormwood.
Stab it to death, devotedly and firmly.

--For such a blow, for the smoke, for the bitterness of torment --
For a destitute cry of burning dust --
You shall get to know the land, where there is no love and
   no boredom,
You will hear there unrepeatable verses.

- - You shall gain that righteous earth,
Where the bread is light, where olive trees are in bloom.
There in the fresh air sounds slumber
There slumbers the bee- and a bird flies in the air.

\(^{61}\) Although this literally means 'flame or fire', since this portion of the text refers to the biblical tale of Abraham and Issac, I have chosen to retain the biblical meaning. [Genesis 22:6] "Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Issac. He himself took the firestone and the knife and the two walked off together." It should also be noted that the biblical text itself notes that the literal meaning of "firestone" is "fire".

\(^{62}\) This passage refers to the story of Abraham and Issac, when Abraham is called by God to prove his devotion and loyalty by taking his son Issac to the place of sacrifice and offering him to God. Instead of having to kill his only son however, God spares Issac when he sees how willing Abraham was to do God's bidding, even to the point of killing his most beloved son. The entire story can be found in Genesis 22:1-19. This is an important passage biblically, since it is only after Abraham passes God's "test" or "ordeal" that an angel of the Lord visits Abraham and conveys God's blessing, which is to make Abraham's descendants as numerous as the stars.

\(^{63}\) Obsolete (and Rhetorical) term: "прах" in this context means dust or earth. There is no plural form. It also means ashes.
—Подъеми груз бесстрашными руками,
Возьми с собою нож, огонь⁶¹, дрова⁶²
И понеси на жертвенные камни,
Где — прах⁶³ и соль, где выжена трава...

—Там все, чем тщетно тешишься ты ныне,
Все скучные дела твоей земли,
Ты обложи пылающей полынью
И преданно и твердо заколи.

—За тот удар, за дым, за горечь муки —
За нищий крик сгорающей трухи —
Узнаешь край, где нет любви и скуки,
Услышьшь бесповоротные стихи.

—Ты обретешь ту праведную землю,
Где легок хлеб, где маслины в цвету.
Там в воздухе прохладном звуки дремлют,
Там спит пчела — и птица — на лету.

---

⁶¹ Although this literally means 'flame or fire', since this portion of the text refers to the biblical tale of Abraham and Isaac, I have chosen to retain the biblical meaning. [Genesis 22:6] "Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Issac. He himself took the firestone and the knife and the two walked off together." It should also be noted that the biblical text itself notes that the literal meaning of "firestone" is "fire".

⁶² This passage refers to the story of Abraham and Issac, when Abraham is called by God to prove his devotion and loyalty by taking his son Issac to the place of sacrifice and offering him to God. Instead of having to kill his only son however, God spares Issac when he sees how willing Abraham was to do God's bidding, even to the point of killing his most beloved son. The entire story can be found in Genesis 22:1-19. This is an important passage biblically, since it is only after Abraham passes God's "test" or "ordeal" that an angel of the Lord visits Abraham and conveys God's blessing, which is to make Abraham's descendants as numerous as the stars.

⁶³ Obsolete (and Rhetorical) term: "прах" in this context means dust or earth. There is no plural form. It also means ashes.
- - Where abundance watered the desert - -
You will tread unhurriedly with a bare foot...
For such happiness my insatiable soul did not even
Dare to ask!
—Где бладодать пустыню оросила —
Боцой стопой ты ступишь не спеша...
Такого счастья даже не просила —
Не смела! —ненасытная душа.
- - Winds shall begin to blow softly from quiet oceans - -
And there - strengthening dreams fly,
And there - lofty organs sing
Of a blessed, fruitful silence.

- - And thus you shall live in boundless harmony,
Thus you shall honor the promised harmony.
And you shall listen to the sound and wait for it diligently,
And you shall increase a splendid treasure.

... And I fell on the quivering earth,
And a fiery blue color began to sway! - -
And horrified, I cried in darkness: I accept.
Amen.

2.

Cedar logs shook,
Crackled - and caught fire!
Life rushed about in a final captivity,
And writhed like a wild animal.

A flame began to twirl above the sufferer,
It flickered, flared up, crawled downwards,
Bit my face and fingers,
Stung my eyes with smoke...

Oh, this unequal struggle!
In crimson silence - -
And in blasphemous despair,
With a prayer on my lips,
I raised the heavy knife
Against the convulsions, wails, torment,
This supplication and trembling.
— Повеют ветры с тихих океанов —
И вот — летят крепительные сны,
И вот — поют высокие органы
Блаженной, плодотворной тишины.

— Так будешь жить в гармонии безбрежной,
Так будешь чтить обетованный лад.
И слушать звук, и ждать его прилежно,
И умножать великолепный клад."

... И Я упал на дрогнувшую землю,
И зашатались огненная синая —
И ужаснувшись, крикнул в тьму приемлю.
Аминь.

2.

Дрогнули кедровые поленья,
Треснули — и зажглись!
Металась в последнем плене,
Зверем билась жизнь.

Завертелся огонь над страдалицей,
Прыгал, взлетал, сползал,
Кусал мне лицо и пальцы,
Дымом колол глаза...

О, эта — в багровом молчании —
Неравная борьба!
И в богохульном отчаяньи,
С молитвою на губах,
Я на корчи, на вопли, на муку,
На эту мольбу и дрожь
Занес тяжелый нож.
The firmament shook,
Collapsing in thunder and darkness.
A whirlwind tugged at my hand!
In a fiery crash, in smoke,
In the scent of burnt skin,
For an instant
God's face
Flamed up.

Iron death
Fell into bushes with a whistling sound.
Lord,
You!

3.

... The voice came to me saying: - Stop and heed.
Liberate disturbing flesh
And hurry to forsake this earth,
Where I ordered you to tie and stab it to death64.

- - Here is your life!65 I have no need of it.
Shall I ask tribute from you, my son, in the terrestrial fields?
No! I commanded you - and you didn't know mercy...
For this bitterness of the sacrificial intoxication
I do pardon you and shall pardon you for all.

---

64 Again, this is a reference to the story of Abraham and Issac. The verb "закалывать/колоть/заколоть" means "to stab (to death)", to begin to chop. Although Issac was later freed by God's word, Abraham did intend to follow the original order, which was to sacrifice (presumably through stabbing) Issac, just as he would have any sacrificial offering.
65 Although the word "life" is used here, the text clearly refers, again, to Issac, Abraham's son and his heir, thus, his "life".
Дрогнула твердь,
Обрушиваясь в гром и тьму.
Вихрь рванул мою руку!
В огненном треске, в дыму,
В запахе горелой кожи,
На миг
Зажегся луг
Божий.

Железная смерть
Со свистом упала в кусты.
Господи,
Ты!

3.

...Мне голос был: — Остановись и внемли.
Освободи мятущуюся плоть
И поспеши покинуть эту землю,
Где Я велел — связать и заколоть.64

— Вот жизнь твоя!65 Мне этого не надо.
Тебя ли, сын, в земных полях взыщу?
Нет! Я велел — и ты не знал пощады...
За эту горечь жертвенного чада
Я все тебе прощаю и прошу.

64 Again, this is a reference to the story of Abraham and Issac. The verb "закалывать/колоть/заколоть" means "to stab (to death)", to begin to chop. Although Issac was later freed by God's word, Abraham did intend to follow the original order, which was to sacrifice (presumably through stabbing) Issac, just as he would have any sacrificial offering.
65 Although the word "life" is used here, the text clearly refers, again, to Issac, Abraham's son and his heir, thus, his "life".
-- I say: for a simple and light glance,
For these three ruthless knots,
For this knife, flame, firewood, cords,
For the life, that grew faint below the knife,

-- I, having put you to the test, by the fire of sacrifice,
Command you: live, My son, live!
Do not fear dreams and frenzied desires,
Do not fear boredom, grief and love.

-- Be on the earth, living and dying,
Know terrestrial roses and thistles,
Frequent heralds will fly down
To you from the musical summits of paradise.

--- And, listening to inaudible songs,
That a breeze bore from afar,
You suddenly shall understand, that there is no more
marvelous game,

Than to catch the peal of these waves.

-- Know that: Nothing is a hindrance to the poet,
But all leads to the desired shores.
There is My bidding: Not to run from tears and laughter,
But to look your loved ones and your enemies in the face.
— Я говорю: за взгляд, простой и легкий,
За эти три безжалостных узла,
За этот нож, огонь, дрова, веревки,
За жизнь, что под ножом изнемогла,

— Я, испытав тебя огнем закланья,
Тебе велю: живи, Мой сын, живи.
Не бойся снов и яростных желаний,
Не бойся скуки, горя и любви.

— Будь на земле, живя и умирая,
Земные ведай розы и волчцы,
К тебе из музыкальных высей рай
Слетаться будут частые гонцы.

И, слушая неслышанные песни,
Что ветерок донес издалека,
Ты вдруг поймешь, что нет игры чудесней,
Чем этих волн улавливать расскат.

— Так знай, ничто поэту не помеха,
Но все ведет к желанным берегам.
Вот Мой завет: не бегать слез и смеха,
Смотреть в глаза любимым и врагам...
—To stand before the resonant salt of an ocean,
To respond resoundingly to happiness, to surf,
To enter into a merry, incorporeal dance,
Cursed seven fold, a dance with oneself.

- - To go to feminine salutary charm,
Like a sail in the sea - to a lighthouse,
So that dear breasts would be warmed in the palms of your hands,
So as to caress and call a woman: mine.
— Стоять пред гулкой солью океана,
Звучать в ответ на радость, на прибой,
В веселии, семижды окаянном,
В бесплотный пляс вступать — с самим собой.

— На женскую спасительную прелесть
Идти, как в море парус — на маяк,
Чтоб милые в ладонях груди грелись,
Чтоб женщину ласкать и звать: моя.
-- Having abandoned the coast of the earth at times,
To cast off in dreams of aimless beauty...
... To pass one's path walking with a bear's gait,
With a bear's heart, clear and simple.

-- ... Not to run from blessings and the affairs of the narrow vale of earth,
But having accepted all, to thank the Lord for everything.
To celebrate, when muscles play
To realize oneself. To be fruitful.

66 Although the Russian uses the singular, the plural form is a better rendition in English.
— Земли порой оставив побережья,
Отчалить в сны бесцельной красоты...
...Свой малый путь пройти стопой медвежьей,
С медвежьим сердцем, ясным и простым.

— ...Не бегать благ и дел юдоли узкой,
Но все приняв, за все благодарить
Торжествовать, когда играет мускул.66
Осуществлять себя. Плодотворить.

66 Although the Russian uses the singular, the plural form is a better rendition in English.
CHAPTER 5

Сатир

Satir

(1929)
**Introduction**

In the end, dear friends, it is quite possible
That demons drive human fate
That in their game, big and cautious
It is for them that we eat, propagate and hopelessly yearn.

That on the paths of love, good and evil
They drive us, sitting on our shoulders adroitly,
Like the classic Armenian who drives his donkey
Enticing it with a carrot on his whip.

Calmly I speak: It's all the same to me.
I like to meet and touch women,
Wine often gladdens me,
I love poetry, silvery things...

And if, in the end, I am the spoils of that
Darkness, in which at first I flickered up --
It's all the same to me: I have taken it all into account
Yet nightingales sang to me about joy.

Be it that these demons trick me,
When my lover is in my arms.
Let them, secretly controlling our lives, guffaw
In the gloating hour of devilish leisure --

Perhaps because I am myopic --
But the world often seems beautiful to me - like music.
I surrender, I gladly raise my arms.
Dance, devils. I am ready for anything.
Вступление

В конце концов, друзья, вполне возможно,
Что демоны ведут судьбу людскую,
Что в их игре, большой и осторожной,
Для них едим, плодимся и тоскуем.

Что на путях любви, добра и зла
Ведут нас, на плечах усевшись ловко,
Как армянин классический — осла:
Маня висящей на кнуте морковкой.

Спокойно говорю: мне все равно.
Мне нравится встречать и трогать женщин,
Меня нередко веселит вино,
Люблю стихи, серебряные вещи...

И если я, в конце концов, добыча
Той тьмы, в которой я мерцал вначале,
Мне все равно: я все учел и вычел —
Мне соловьи о радости свистали.

Пусть эти демоны меня морочат,
Когда в моих руках моя подруга,
Пусть, тайно управляя мной, хохочут
В элорадный час чертовского досуга,

Пусть только потому, что близорук я,
Мне часто мир — как музыка прекрасен,
Сдаюсь, охотно поднимаю руки —
Пляшите, черти. Я на все согласен.
What does a healthy male ponder
In the hours of masculine thoughts and dreams?
Reader, like your uncle and your son --
Each dreams of the same as you.

Be he draftsman, diver, clerk, 
Bureaucrat, tenant or poet, 
Butcher, tailor, a philosopher unread, 
Not of glory dreams he, oh no!

Not of making money, strange as it seems, 
It is not God he wants to fight at night, 
Thoughts of wise ones do not burn him with their delusion, 
But woman makes his flesh tingle.

I, the undersigned male, 
Comparatively speaking, almost an anchorite, 
Do not see either sense or reason 
In maintaining our ancient, our masculine secret.

I say: neither banks nor a Parliament 
Have killed the essence of maleness... 
O, give me, for these words, parchment 
So that honest words will not be worn away.

By immeasurable female allure - bodily charm 
Our earthly semi-haze is warmed for us. 
Any woman to us is beautiful and charming, 
Sweet, desirable, joyful, warm.
1

О чем здоровый думает мужчина
В часы мужских раздумий и мечты?
Читатель, дядя твоему и сыну
Подобно — все о том же, что и ты.

Будь он чертежник, водолаз, приказчик,
Чиновник, арендатор иль поэт,
Мясник, портной, философ завалящий,
Он не о славе думает, о, нет!

Не о наживе, как это ни странно,
Не Бога хочет он в ночи бороть,
Не мысли мудрых жгут его обманом,
Но женщина его пружинит плоть.

Я, нижеподписавшийся мужчина,
Сравнительно — почти анахорет,
Не вижу больше смысла и причины
Хранить наш древний, наш мужской секрет.

Я говорю: ни банки, ни парламент
Мужского не убили естества...
О, дайте мне для этих слов пергамент,
Чтоб не стирались честные слова.

Безмерной женской прелестью — телесной —
Согрета нам земная полумгла.
Любая нам прекрасна и прелестна,
Мила, желанна, радостна, тепла.
And savings banks,
Where dressed in a morning coat, the swineherd goes
Have taught us, a miser's grimaces
But all the same, did not castrate us completely.

I confess in the name of my fellow-brothers:
We never met such a woman,
To whom we would not extend our embrace,
To whom we could not stretch out a hand.

2

It was five days... six days ago
I walked along past a commercial arcade,
Where immovably stand,
Two mannequins in a fashionable entourage.

For a long time, I was accustomed to seeing them there:
Always the same, not changing their posture and gestures,
They stand - a bride and her groom.
Forever like that - a blissful bride

Who, with a smile, glances at her groom,
He looks to one side, not betraying passion...
The two of them are together - as if they were two verses of a poem,
Rhyming with midnight happiness.

---

1The Russian in this stanza implies a joke. The Russian word "скопческий" refers to a "eunuch" and the verb in the last line of the stanza, "осколнить" means "to castrate". It should also be noted that the verb "копить" means "to save money".

217
И ссудо-сберегательные кассы,
Куда в визитке едет свинопас,
Нас научили скопеческим1 гримасам,
Но все ж не вовсе оскопили нас.

Я признаюсь от имени собратий:
Мы не встречали женщины такой,
Которой не раскрыли бы объятий,
К которой не тянулись бы рукой.

2

Тому дней пять... дней шесть тому назад
Я проходил коммерческим пассажем,
Где издавана незыблемо стоят
Два манекена в светском антураже.

Я с давних пор привык там видет их:
Все так же, не меняя поз и жестов,
Стоят — невеста и ее жених.
И вечно так — счастливая невеста

С улыбкою глядит на жениха,
Он смотрит вбок, не выдавая страсти...
Они вдвоем — как будто два стиха,
Рифмующиеся с полночным счастьем.

1 The Russian in this stanza implies a joke. The Russian word "скопеческий" refers to a "eunuch" and the verb in the last line of the stanza. "осколить" means "to castrate". It should also be noted that the verb "копить" means "to save money".
And thus, I shuffle hurriedly past,
A kind of sexless bureaucrat.
Suddenly - my soul experiences ecstasy-
The bride stands naked before me.
И вот я мимо шаракаю спеша,
Так, этаками чиновником бесполым,
Как вдруг — хлебнула радости душа! —
Невеста предо мной стояла голой.
Look here — it was papier-mâché, of course! But it was so sudden!
And I, shabby, crumbly, and feeble,
Again, have regained my strength, again, I am resilient and taut,
Once more, I am valid, upright and real.

3

Adam, not knowing boredom and labor,
Like a young beast, he frolicked in the bushes of paradise.
He lived with Eve, not knowing shame,
Live blessedly he did, almost not taking out

His sluggish hands from his primitive trouser pockets
(By the way, if you believe the old book,
Then they still didn't know clever tricks.
To them, beneath the fig leaves hung just figs!)

And nothing but his sins passed into our possession -
We labored for bread - and love is not easier than laboring for bread.
Adam didn't know: "why " and "for what,"
He hadn't touched the stars, hadn't thrust his finger into the sky.

Like music, he knew how to listen to laziness,
(Think for a moment: this really, really was true!)
Not philosophizing, he lay down with Eve in the shade,
Not philosophizing, he jumped on the mare...

But we, having forgotten the smell of the little field herbs,
A ludicrous tribe of scarecrows,
At the appearance of a woman, we swallow our wolfish howl,
Roaming in tram-cars, in woods of temptations.
Поймите, ведь — папье-маше! Но — вдруг!
И я, обеззялый, рыхлый и ладящий,
Опять окреп, опять — упруг и туг,
Вновь — стоящий, стоящий, настоящий.

3
Адам, не зная скуки и труда,
Как юный зверь ревился в кущах рая.
Он с Евой жил, не ведая стыда,
Блаженно жил, почти не вынимая

Ленивых рук из примитивных брюк...
(А впрочем, если верить старой книге,
Тогда еще не знали житых штук:
Под фиовым листом висели фиги!)

А нам достались лишь грехи его —
Хлеб труден и любовь не легче хлеба.
Адам не знал: зачем и для чего,
Не трогал звезд, не тыкал пальцем в небо.

Как музыку, умел он слушать лень
(Подумайте: ведь это было, было!)
Не мудрствуя, ложился с Евой в тень,
Не мудрствуя, бросался на кобылу...

А мы, забыв дух травки полевой,
Смешное племя чучелообразных,
При виде жен глотаем волчий вой,
Рыща — в трамваях — по лесам соблазнов.
Unfair judges strike the accused for truthful statements,
But there - I love the evening metro,
Where tender breasts warm my back,
Where a feminine hip warms my soul.

Ah, yes, I love the mysterious burden of
Diverse breasts, shoulders and hands pressing in from all sides.
Here, to a common paramour (in an unexpected harem)
A newspaper is a shield and a friend.

Oh, the carnal fire of congregational intoxication,\(^2\)
Abundant, bestial wealth....
I enter, as if into a luxurious bathing scene by Renoir, \(^3\)
Into the dense flesh of the evening metro train.

I immerse myself into the cruel flesh of taut bodies,
Surreptitiously excited.
I join the magnetic mating current\(^4\)
A sensitive direct conductor.

To my right, a skinny girl trembles,
To my left - an agitated woman about forty years old...
Stay excited, keep excited young Creole girl!
And from below a tender hand is groping...

---

\(^2\)The Russian word "соборный" is literally "cathedral" (attributive) in English, however, as the noun which follows means "ecstasy, fever and intoxication", it is more fitting to change the adjective to "resplendent", "palatial" or "elevated".

\(^3\)This image refers to the famous Renoir painting of a woman taking a bath with her bare back toward the viewer.

\(^4\)The Russian word "ток" means "current" and "mating".

223
За правду бьют неправедные судьи,
Но вот — люблю вечернее метро,
Где греют спину ласковые груши
Где греют душу женское бедро.

Да, я люблю таинственное бремя
Разнообразных грудей, плеч и рук.
Здесь общему любовнику (в гареме
Нечаянном) газета — щит и друг.

О, плотский жар соборного плара,
Животное обильное добро...
Вхожу, как в роскошь бани Ренуара,3
В густую плоть вечернего метро.

Внедряюсь в стан, любовный и жестокий,
Пруженных тел, ярящихся тайком.
Включаюсь в магнитические токи4
Чувствительным прямым проводником.

Дрожит направо девочка худая,
Налево — женщина, лет сорока...
Ярись, ярись, креолка молодая!
А снизу шарит нежная рука...

---

2 The Russian word "соборный" is literally "cathedral" (attributive) in English, however, as the noun which follows means "ecstasy, fever and intoxication", it is more fitting to change the adjective to "resplendent", "palatial" or "elevated".
3 This image refers to the famous Renoir painting of a woman taking a bath with her bare back toward the viewer.
4 The Russian word "ток" means "current" and "mating".

224
How sweet it is, when an invisible hand
Extends its sympathy to you
And you feel a belly passionately pressing
Against you from behind - its tremor violent.

And, moving your knee gently forward
Into the sympathetic passageway,
You hear yourself, how extremities are flowering,
And you register the flow of seed.

5

Where are the games and diversions of our forefathers,
Their hunts for impassioned women...
Then the oak forests often saw,
How the prey itself went looking for trouble. 5

Where are the games and pursuits of our forefathers!
In the game the fig leaf would be lost...
Now, meeting a woman in a tram-car,
We say: Sorry, is that your handkerchief?

Already a woman is being drained of hope,
While another - next to her - dries up from thwarted desire,
Whereas we, horrifying castrated ignoramuses
Sit, squeezing our tails beneath our jackets. 6

---

5 The Russian here implies a sexual joke. The word "покой" is derived from the word "покр" or "horn". This implies the male sexual organ. Thus, in this line, the image is of women who look for "trouble", i.e. throwing themselves on the male organ.

6 The image generated by the last line of this stanza is one of impotence and emasculation. Men are no longer as they were before, primitive, and openly going after women and their passions - now they are "sexless", like the "eunuch" in Poem #1 in this cycle.
Как сладостно, когда невидной дланью
Ты пред собой сочувствие найдешь
И живота, разъятого жажденьем,
Внимаешь сзади бешенство и дрожь,
И, продвигая бережно колено
В раздавшийся сочувственно проход,
Ты слышишь сам, как расцветают члены,
Ты семени воспринимаешь ход.

Где наших предков игры и забавы,
Охоты на разгоряченных жен...
Тогда нередко видели дубравы,
Как шла сама добыча на рожон.5

Где наших предков игры и погони!
В игре терялся фиговый листок...
Теперь, встречая женщину в вагоне,
Мы говорим: простите, ваш платок?...

Уже исходит женщина надеждой,
Другая — рядом — жухнет от тоски
Мы ж, холостые жуткие невежды,
Сидим, поджав своя под пиджаки.6

---

5 The Russian here implies a sexual joke. The word "рожон" is derived from the word "por" or "horn". This implies the male sexual organ. Thus, in this line, the image is of women who look for "trouble", i.e. throwing themselves on the male organ.

6 The image generated by the last line of this stanza is one of impotence and emasculation. Men are no longer as they were before, primitive, and openly going after women and their passions - now they are "sexless", like the "eunuch" in Poem #1 in this cycle.
We don't look - we don't dare to! Come on, surely you can't
do it right away!^  
We're polite - and only from afar  
Do we, from time to time, let our glance roam  
Over the stubborn profile of a sensitive nipple.

Where is the honest merriment of our forefathers!  
Laying down with one another right away and openly in olden days.  
Above those who have lain down amorously did not hang  
An alarm clock, planners, a calendar...

And women display all at once  
Their gay treasures  
To a simple-souled and grimy satyr,  
To those hunting for the joy of love.

Now it isn't so - though a chauffeur or an athlete  
And only rarely - and then from afar -  
Knees open up a woman to us,  
But our hand is feeble.

The triangle mysteriously glimmers,  
A sign of voluptuousness, countenance of bliss and spring,  
But the prisoner hides under the hat,  
Chained into sorrowful trousers...

Oh, only at times, in the metro, where the air is heavy,  
In a night café, where fate has driven you to,  
Does happiness blaze up for us in dark nests  
Between white raised legs.

^ (i.e. The men look, but not right away - that just isn't done in modern times.)
Мы не глядим – не смеем! – что вы, сразу!  
Мы вежливы – и лишь издалека  
Мы изредка обжигаем глазом  
Упрымый профиль чуткого соска.

Где наших предков честное веселье!  
Ложились прямо и открыто встарь.  
Над легкими любовно – не висели  
Будильник, расписання, календарь...

И женщины показывали сразу  
Веселые сокровища свои  
Сатирам простодушным и чумазым,  
Охотникам за радостью любви.

Теперь не то – в шофере иль в спортсмене  
Лишь изредка – и то издалека—  
Нам раскрывают женщину колени,  
Но немощна бессильная рука.

Таинственно меряет треугольник,  
Знак неги, лик блаженства и весны,  
Но прячется под шляпой вевольник,  
Закованный в печальные штаны...

.............................................................................................................................................

О, лишь порой, в метро, где грузен воздух,  
В ночной кафе, куда загонит рок,  
Нам вспыхивает счастье в темных гнездах  
Меж белых высоко взнесенных ног.

7 (i.e. The men look, but not right away - that just isn't done in modern times.)
CHAPTER 6

Парижские ночи

Parisian Nights

(1932)
I.
On the fertile layer, on the sheet of paper
I fling ink seeds.
The light of the lamp, bashful and having a sense of importance,
warms them,
And the night and stillness are fertilizing them.

And I see in the dim light, burdened by verse,
A fearful, dark, musical growth...
Blossom, garden of words, cultivated by nocturnal labors,
Open to all, who are lonely and simple.

Here in the half-light of night, squalid and bleak,
What is obscure becomes more visible, and what is secret -more audible...

Oh, midnight fruit, oh ripening word
Of my stammering sorrow.

II.
You are again with me - and there was no separation,
Oh, dear spectre of my joy.
And again with me - are your eyes and hands.
(They have become wiser and sadder.)

They have grown wiser - years and years have passed...
They have become sadder with every day:
Oh, sweet air of bitter freedom,
Oh, world, where it grows colder every hour.
I.
На плодородный пласт, на лист писчебумажный
Чернильные бросаю семена.
Их греет лампы свет, затенчивый и важный,
А удобряют — ночь и тишина.

И вижу в полумгле, стихом отягошенной,
Пугливый черный музыкальный рост...
Цвети, словесный сад, ночной трудом взращенный,
Открытый всем, кто одинок и прост.

Здесь, в полумгле ночной, убогой и суровой,
И темное — видней, и тайное — слышней...

О, полуночный плод, о, зреющее слово
Косноязычной горести моей.

II.
Ты вновь со мной — и не было разлуки,
О, милый призрак радости моей.
И вновь со мной — твои глаза и руки.
(Они умнее стали и грустней.)

Они умнее стали — годы, годы...
Они грустнее, с каждым днем грустней:
О, сладкий воздух горестной свободы,
О, мир, где с каждым часом холодней.
I am happy, so happy at our unexpected meeting,
To kiss your thin hand again...
But, my unexpected friend, I have become impoverished -
I have nothing
To give you pleasure with. And there is nothing to say.

Should I tell you that my days are without resonance?
That by night I am - at times - in hell?
That at night I dream of Russia,
To which during the day I cannot find a path?

That at home weariness awaits me
And the staircase is becoming steeper every day
And that now my love and compassion -
Resemble contempt and indolence?

What can I tell you?... The autumnal city is growing chilly.
What can I ask you?... The tram-car is speeding somewhere.
The cooling world is emptier and even more blue...
What can I ask of you? Do not forget me, farewell.

What can I inquire about? There is no answer - to anything.
My friend, what can I give you - in my poverty...
My only friend, oh, how sad is this:
The two of us can not even be silent together.
Я рад, так рад нежданной нашей встрече,
Худую руку вновь поцеловать...
Но, друг нечаянный, я беден стал — мне нечем
Тебя порадовать И не о чем сказать.

...О том, что дни мои — глухонемые?
О том, что ночь я — порой — в ад?
О том, что ночью снится мне Россия,
К которой днем дороги не найду?

Что дома ждет меня теперь усталость
(А лестница длиннее каждый день)
И что теперь любовь моя и жалость —
Похожи на презрение и лень?

О чем сказать тебе?.. Осенний город стынет.
О чем просить тебя?.. Торопится трамвай.
Мир холодеющий синее и пустыней...
О чем просить тебя? Прости, не забывай.

О чем спросить? Нет — ни на что — ответа.
Мой друг, что дать тебе — в убожестве моем...
Нам даже не о чем и помолчать вдвоем.
III. 1

In the dull diffused drizzle
Hounded by the whistling of autumn,
I lose without regret
Those arid long-faded days.

The moment I recall, how you, in a warm shawl
Strolled with me until daybreak. 2
On the smooth surfaces of the capital city asphalt
The streetlamps stand steadfast.

It's good to be streetlamps - they know the answers:
To what - where - why...
Each evening the torch-bearer lights them
With a light on his shoulder.

But my Negligent Lamp-Lighter,
Why did You light me.
And placed me flung-wide open
To the wind of four roads.

Why did you place me in the fog,
Where my own footsteps confuse me.
Why did you condemn me -- from the depths of silence
To elicit nothing but lecherous and delirious sounds?

............................

1 This almost identical to poem #14 in the 1925 collection, Of My Millennia. While the poem in that collection comes in part Two, just after the poem, "Snow in Paris", and while it, in effect, solidifies the transition to the urban milieu setting, it is also fitting that it should be repeated in the collection set in Paris. The sad tone and sorrowful recollection of the past reflects the overall tone of the collection, Paris Nights. The primary differences between this poem and the #14 poem from the 1925 collection, is that the question marks in the fourth stanza are eliminated, and the sixth stanza is eliminated entirely from the version in this collection (1932).

2 At this point, we expect the poet to tell us about the moment, but it is so heart-breaking that he can't tell about it.
В скучном рассеянном мрежьне,
Свистом осенем гоним,
Теряю без сожаления
Сухие отцветшие дни.

Лишь вспомню, как в старенькой шали ты
Гуляла со мной до зари...
На глади столичной асфальтовой
Твердо стоят фонари.

Хорошо фонарям – они знают:
Что – куда – зачем...
Каждый вечер их зажигает
Фонарщик с огнем на плече.

А мой Нерадивый Фонарщик,
Зачем Он меня возжег.
Поставил распахнутым настежь
На ветру четырех дорог.

Поставил меня в тумане,
Где смутен мне собственный след.
Обрек – из недр молчанья
Извлекать только блад и бред.

1 This almost identical to poem #14 in the 1925 collection, Of My Millennia. While the poem in that collection comes in part Two, just after the poem, "Snow in Paris", and while it, in effect, solidifies the transition to the urban milieu setting, it is also fitting that it should be repeated in the collection set in Paris. The sad tone and sorrowful recollection of the past reflects the overall tone of the collection, Paris Nights. The primary differences between this poem and the #14 poem from the 1925 collection, is that the question marks in the fourth stanza are eliminated, and the sixth stanza is eliminated entirely from the version in this collection (1932).

2 At this point, we expect the poet to tell us about the moment, but it is so heart-breaking that he can't tell about it.
We loaf about along deserted streets
My brother and I -- the dissipated wind.
A Parisian dawn glows pink
Above domes, above proud chimneys.

We stand before eternal eternity
This terrifying world - and I
I cannot be saved neither by my struggle, nor my carefreeness
From the whiteness of non-existence.

IV.
As if in a fissure of a large canvas,
The dazzling pitch,
The numb music of glory
Forces its way into a sky full of holes.

This is the night, the primeval night,
One that sows the seeds of love and separation,
This is the hour, when there is succor for
The weak extended hand.

The hours come to a stop
Above a silence that they read,
Measures are false and weights are false
When the nighttime hour comes.

This is the night: The city of stone masses,
Of iron-concrete-brick blocks,
At this hour, became more transparent, more delicate
From a dubious violin-like truth.
По пустынному шлемся городу
Я и брат мой — беспутный ветр.
Над домами, над трубами гордыми
Розовеет парижский рассвет.

Вот стоим перед вечной вечностью:
Этот страшный мир — и я.
Не спастись ни борьбой, ни беспечностью
От белесого небытия.

IV.
Словно в щели большого холста,
Пробивается в небе дырявом
Ослепительная высота,
Леденящая музыка славы.

Это — ночь, первобытная ночь,
Та, что сеет любовь и разлуку,
Это — час, когда чеchem помочь
Протянувшему слабую руку.

Останавливаются часы
Над застигнутыми тишиной,
Ложны меры и ложны весы
В час, когда наступает ночное.

Это — ночь: город каменных масс,
Глуб железо-бетонно-кирпичных,
Стал прозрачней, нежней в этот час
От сомнительной правды скрипичной.
Hearts come to stop
Flawless hearts, like logarithms...
At this hour, merchants are raising a fuss
Over the accounts of midnight rhythms.

Everything, that was built up each day,
All of it is comes tumbling down at night - into the trash
and the scraps.
It all shall perishes, and ancient Yerihon shall perish
From the cosmic music of the night.

At night, melancholy and wine
(The heart beats more strongly in the darkness),
At night what is white often becomes black,
Death gives us mysterious signs.

At night I even pity the fortunate one.
At night people are more weak and closer by...
A tremendous sorrow flourishes
In the nighttime rich soil\(^3\) of Paris.

V.
And once again dots of lights roam in windows,
Shutters rumble,
And old men warm the sorrow of old
By their fireplaces.

Thus, with a crystalline, but terrestrial music,
In the rancid stillness,
A rain pours down, lashing the system of streetlamps
Against their yellow glass.

\(^3\)The term for "rich soil" is a clear juxtaposition of imagery: the recollection of Bessarabia and Central Russia. "Chernozem" is the rich black soil that is commonly found in central European Russia.
Останавливается сердца
Безупречные, как логарифмы...
В этот час поднимают купцу
Над счетами полночьные рифмы.

Все, что строилось картонным днем,
Ночью рушится — в мусор и ключья.
Гибнет, гибнет древней Ерихон
От космической музыки ночи.

Ночью гуше тоска и вино
(Сердце бьется сильнее во мраке),
Ночью белое часто — черно,
Смерть нам делает тайные знаки.

Ночью даже счастливого жаль.
Люди ночью слабее и ближе...
Расцветает большая печаль
На ночном черноземе³ Парижа.

V.

И вновь блуждают в окнах огоньки,
Грохочут ставни,
И у каминов греют старинки
Печаль о давнем.

Вот музыкой хрустальной, но земной,
В тиши прогорклоей,
Струиться дождь, хлеща фонарный строй
По желтым стеклам.

³ The term for "rich soil" is a clear juxtaposition of imagery: the recollection of Bessarabia and Central Russia. "Chernozem" is the rich black soil that is commonly found in central European Russia.
And the streetlamps run, they rush off
Away from the persistent haze.
The arctic night collapsed
Like a black avalanche.

It collapsed, an inaudible run/race urges,
It knocks at home,
And a man falls beneath it,
And so does the wild beast, and the bird.

But there are hearts, there is a barrier
Among us to the avalanche.
And the night and the silence is not too much for them,
And sleep is not necessary for them.

There is a nocturnal man - he withstands/resists
The great pain.
There is a man- whose heart is gladdened
By verbal abuse against God.

... A bastion of rebels and strange people, -
On black soil
The night nourishes a beautiful bitter fruit:
The dream of a mutiny.
И фонари бегут, несутся прочно
От мглы упорной.
Обрушилась арктическая ночь
Лавиной черной.

Обрушилась, стремит неслышный бег,
В дома стучится,
И падает под нею человек,
И зверь, и птица.

Но есть сердца, лавине ест одна
Средь нас преграда —
Под силу им и ночь, и тишина,
Им сна не надо.

Есть человек ночной — он устоит
Пред болью многой.
Есть человек — он сердце веселит
Хулой на Бога.

... Мятежников и чудаков оплот, —
На черном грунте
Питает ночь прекрасный горький плод:
Мечту о бунте.
VI.

In the frozen silence,
    in the ancient disheveled and torn gloom,
An aimless path in the midnight fog
Once again was opened to me.

Oh, the sleeping man
    Who returned nocturnal primogeniture to a dog,
Here are the night, the streetlamp and the snow,
    They are the paved meadows for dream-growing.

Melodious ceremonial grains
    drop in the darkness for hours.
Poets - like dogs -
    They alone hearken to them in the black wilderness.

VII.

This night without daybreak is
Like a risqué fisherman's song,
Like the sleepless lamp of a poet,
Like a green dampness.

This urban night is
Like Cain awaiting Abel,
In a hot shade, beneath the blackthorn
Like the smile of a blind love -
VI.
В промёрзлой тишине,
в старинной мгле, всклокоченной и рваной,
Открылся снова мне
бесцелный путь в полночные туманы.

0, спящий человек,
отдавший псу ночное первородство,
Здесь — ночь, фонарь и снег,
мощенные луга для мечтоводства.

Роняют в мглу часы
певучие торжественные зерна.
Поэты — словно псы —
одни вмьают им в пустыне черной.

VII.
Как соленая песня рыбачка,
Как бессонная лампа поэта,
Как зеленая сырость кабацкая —
Эта ночь без рассвета.

Как в горячей тени под терновником
Поджидющий Адама — Каин,
Как улыбка слепого любовника —
Эта ночь городская.
This night without answer is
Like leg-less ruddy good spirits,
Like the undilapidated word of the Old Testament\(^4\)
Like an anonymous letter of love -

Like a siren, defeated by the anguish
Of a ship going off into the distance,
This night is like a strained horn -
That is this night without exodus.

\(^4\) Knut is using a play on words in this phrase, as the term for Old Testament is Ветхий завет.
Как безногого бодрость румяная,
Как неветхое слово Завета,¹⁴
Как письмо о любви безымянное —
   Эта ночь без ответа.
Как сирена, тоской пораженная,
Уходящего в даль парохода,
Эта ночь — как гудок напряженная —
   Эта ночь без исхода.

¹⁴ Knut is using a play on words in this phrase, as the term for Old Testament is Ветхий завет.
VIII.

What can I say: about the airless dark-blue sky,
About the boredom of stars, that trembles above me,
About whether the song above me is rebellious, but feeble, -
About whether the song above me is suppressed by silence?

About whether Rozanov, who is laying on the table
With the question, the answer to what is death,
Or about myself, subject to sleeplessness,
To which there is not predicate.

My friends, midnight precursors\(^5\)
How difficult it is to sleep at night, and not to wander,
When nothing and ten times nothing,
Appeases my nocturnal soul...

The moon hangs above the dead village
With the lure, that Rybak threw in peace...
Oh, the greed, the blindness of ancient spoils
Oh, the barking of dogs, who know something.

\(^5\) The Russian word "предтеча" is an archaic word meaning precursor, or forerunner.
ВIII.

О чем сказать: о сини безводушной,
О скуче эвзы, дрожащих надо мной,
О песни ли, мятежной, но тщедушной, —
О пепе, усмиреннои тишиной?

О Розанове ль, на столе лежащем
Вопросом, на который смерть — ответ,
Иль обо мне, бессонном подлежащем,
К которому сказемого нет?

Друзья мой, полночные предтечи,5
Как трудно ночью спать, а не бродить
Когда нам нечем, десятижды нечем
Ночную душу умиротворить...

Луна висит над мертвою деревней
Приманкою, что бросил в мир Рыбак...
О, жадность слепота добычи древней,
О, лай — о чем-то знающих — собак.

---

5 The Russian word "предтеча" is an archaic word meaning precursor, or forerunner.
IX.

There's a window at a midnight way station
And a shadow in the rectangular window,
There's the smile of an unapproachable English woman,
And in the half-deserted café there's a gulp of wine.

Dancing in a wobbly farce\(^6\)
The mistress' exhausted daughter is like
A bow - that glides along an ancient wound,
Or simply is like solitude and the night...

A candle in the night... at the dacha, behind the fence...
A whistle, a song, laughter can be found in the village,
 beyond the river...

It does not take much, I need so little really,
To disturb my insatiable peace.

\(^6\)The Russian word "белеген" is an obsolete term meaning carnival booth, side show or figuratively, a farce.
IX.

Окно на полуночном полустанке.
И тень в прямоугольнике окна,
Улыбка недоступной англичанки,
В полупустом кафе глоток вина,

Танцующая в шатком балагане,
Хозяйская измученная дочь,
Смычок — скользящий по старинной ране,
Иль просто — одиночество и ночь...

Свеча в ночи... на даче, за оградой...
Свист, песня, смех — в деревне, за рекой...
Немного — о, малого мне надо,
Чтобы сутит несытый мой покой.

---

6 The Russian word "балаган" is an obsolete term meaning carnival booth, side show or figuratively, a farce.
X.

In the heart is the still heated scum of coarse insults:
For the deception of humiliating years,
For some mysterious erroneous signs,
That foretold joy and light.

Once again anguish came back to life - Through God's carelessness,
Somewhere at the bottom, through that impossibility,
It stirred distressingly, the anguish
That was promised to me.
Χ.

В сердце — грубых обид неостывшая накипь:
За обман унизительных лет,
За какие-то тайные ложные знаки,
Предвещавшие радость и свет.

Снова ожила — Божьею неосторожностью —
Тяжко двинулась, где-то на дне,
Тоска по той невозможности,
Что была обещана мне.
XI.

The soil lays in the snow. Above it the twigs of Poverty stricken trees rose up. Transparent smoke flutters above. Everything is more simple and more tender, in a ruthless way — and better

Beneath this sky, close and deserted.

What is this about — this snow and this footprint, leading past Me and my frozen-over life?..

Is it about the important thing, the simple thing — and is it about the incomprehensible thing:
About how everything shall pass and pass irretrievably, Like the smoke between the shifting branches.

7 The term for "rose up" is an obsolete one.
XI.

Земля лежит в снегу. Над ней воздели сучья
Деревья низкие. Прозрачный реет дым.
Все проще и нежной, безжалостно – и лучше
Под этим небом, близким и пустым.

О чем же — этот снег, и след, ведущий мимо
Меня и жизни стынущей моей?..

О главном, о простом – и о непостижимом:
О том, что все пройдет и все невозвратимо,
Как дым меж коченеющих ветвей.

---

7 The term for "rose up" is an obsolete one.
XII.

Snow of gladness and snow of sorrow,
Snow of wisdom and of purity,
(We walked in the cool gladness of grief)
Of much we knew, of much we kept silent,
When from the musical void
Upon our souls you fell sorrowfully...

XIII.

In a frozen, bluish-snowy dream,
In an ancient, slow and tender dance,
Heaven and earth twirl in a deadly manner,
With otherworldly snowflakes of dust.

And stiffening in the void of the skies,
A thousand-armed forest called someone.

But an indifferent snow fell from above,
And a black man went along in the snow, not raising his eyelids,
To the accompaniment of the white crunching sound.

And his unhurried footstep was ghastly:
As if he went along on a hopeless white gloom,
From where there is not a way back,
And where it is impossible for anyone to go.
XII.

Снег радости и снег печали,  
Снег мудрости и чистоты.  
(Мы шли в прохладной радости печали)  
О многом знали мы, о многом мы молчали,  
Когда из музыкальной пустоты  
На наши души грустно падал ты...

XIII.

В морозном сне, голубовато-снежном,  
В старинном танце, медленном и нежном,  
Снежниками нешедшими пыля,  
Мертвые кружились небо и земля.

И конченья, в пустоте небес,  
Кого-то звал тысяччёрный лес.

Но сверху падал равнодушный снег,  
А по снегу, не поднимая век,  
Под белый хруст шел черный человек.

И жуток был его неспешный шаг:  
Как будто шел он в гибкий белый мрак,  
Откуда нет возвратного пути,  
И — никому нельзя туда идти.
XIV.

Freezing up, the streetlamp swayed at the entrance.
A policeman smoked a shaggy taper...
And the sky gleamed above the iron roof,
Above the snow, above the black, crooked fire station tower.

A stray mare stands bored in the snow.
On the steppe, straining hard, a locomotive whistled by.
Rubber galoshes crackle a chant about God, about death.
The frost soared with Arctic music.

XV.

A homeless Paris evening rocks a star outside my window.
The chimney struggles frightfully and knocks on the damper of the fireplace.
A friendly lamp shakes on the stubborn, oak table
With its all bronze body, that warms my soul and hand.

The things contract from fright. And I imagine a dream of Orgeev
The Latin Quarter, outside my window, a lampshade with an unreal jasmine
Of a boiler room, simplicity is not the capital - and in the half-light are
A woman who fell asleep, a chair, and an alarm clock that counts boredom.

---

8 The line in the original Russian reads: Rubber galoshes crackled about God, about death.
Since galoshes make sound, Knut clearly is referring to the sound that the galoshes make on the snow (i.e. a "crunchy, crackling sound"). It is more logical to translate this sentence into English in a manner which reflects this sound, hence the addition of the word "chant."
XIV.

Замерзая, качался фонарь у подъезда.
Полицейский курился мохнатой свечой...
А небо сияло над крышей железной,
Над снегом, над черной кривой каланчой.

Скучала в снегу беспризорная лошадь.
В степи, надрываясь, свистел паровоз.
О Боге, о смерти хрустели калоши.8
Арктической музыкой реал мороз.

XV.

Бездомный парижский вечер качает звезду за окном.
Испуганно воет труба и стучится в заслонку камина.
Дружелюбная лампа дрожит на упрямом дубовом столе
Всем бронзовым телом своим, что греет мне душу и руку.

Сжимаются вещи от страха. И мчится оргеевским сном
Латинский квартал за окном, абажур с небывалым
жасмином,
Куба комнатного простота нестоличная – и в полумгле
Заснувшая женщина, стул, будильник, считающий скуку.

---
8 The line in the original Russian reads: Rubber galoshes crackled about God, about death.
Since galoshes make sound, Knut clearly is referring to the sound that the galoshes make on the
snow (i.e. a "crunchy, crackling sound"). It is more logical to translate this sentence into English in
a manner which reflects this sound, hence the addition of the word "chant."

257
XVI.

I no longer know how to tell anything,
I wait for little and I want.
And I have nothing to say and thus remain silent -
And thus I am silent about not a thing.

I don't recall what I once wanted...
In the dazzling summer garden
A military orchestra resounded with a youthful happiness
And promised me... o, not this lot...
In the dusty garden brimming with life...
Choral evening singing, the swarthy air of the night,
The Southern-Russian sunset, the bluish haze of lilac,
And the rapturous trumpet-like peal - they all deceived me.
The peals of ruthless trumpets,
The passionate Bessarabian sky - they all deceived me.
The tenderness of maidenly hands, the heat of trusting lips...
Oh, our world, that tormented, tangled and coarsened
The humiliation of sustaining bread.

...Above the deserted square there is an uncertain snow.
Above the neglected world there is a lethal peace.
A streetlamp becomes numb... A man goes along with mincing steps.
It is cold, my dear friend.
XVI.

Уже ничего не умею сказать,
Немного — жду и хочу.
И не о чем мне говорить и молчать —
И так ни о чем и молчу.

Н помню — чего я когда-то хотел...
В ослепительном летнем саду
 Военный оркестр южным счастьем гремел
И мне обещал... о, не этот удел...
В жизнерадостном пыльном саду...
Обманули — раскаты безжалостных труб,
Бессарабское страстное небо.
Нежность девичьих рук, жар доверчивых губ...
О, наш мир, что замучен, запутан и груб,
Униженье насущного хлеба.

...Над пустеющей площадью — неуверенный снег.
Над заброшенным миром — смертоносный покой.
Леденеет фонарь... Семенит человек.
Холодно, друг другой.
XVII.

Betwixt the stone houses, betwixt the stone roads,
Amidst the hardened faces and devastated eyes,
Among ungenerous hands and hurried legs,
Among sincere lepers.

In the wood of poles and chimneys, of city kiosks,
Between the store and café, the dance hall and pharmacy,
A hundred suns rise, but cold emanates from them
People bustle about, but not a person is seen.

They are unable to go anywhere - they're almost running...
Hurrying, they kiss... Hurrying, they swallow tears.
Oh, hurried love, of hateful labor
Beneath the hopeless whistle of shaggy steam-engines.

Autumn leaves whirl in the air.
Paper boys cry out. Trams go by, ringing.
Buses roar by, flying across bridges
The hours pass by, a heart is devastated.

And a dead person hastens by in a funeral car,
It hurries - for the final time (to a damp and stifling hole)...
... Betwixt the stone homes, amidst the stone hearts,
Along the stone earth, beneath an indifferent sky.

XVIII.

Move away from me, dear chap, move away - I am yawning.
The price of this wretched wisdom is too high.
You see my hand, how it lays on the table, as though it were alive -
I unclench my fist and no longer want anything.
XVII.
Меж каменных домов, меж каменных дорог,
Средь очерствелых лиц и глаз опущенных,
Среди нещедрых рук и торопливых ног,
Среди людей душевно-прокаженных...

В лесу столбов и труб, киосков городских,
Меж лавкой и кафе, танцулькой и аптекой,
Восходят сотни солнц, но холодно от них,
Проходят люди, но не видно человека.

Им не туда идти — они ж почти бегут...
Спеша, целуются... Спеша, слосят слезы.
О, спешная любовь, о, ненавистный труд
Под безнадежный свист косматых паровозов.

Кружатся в воздухе осенние листы.
Кричат газетчики. Звена, скользят трамваи.
Ревут автобусы, вслетая на мосты.
Плывут часы, сердца опустошая.

И в траурном авто торопится мертвец,
Спешит — в последний раз (к дыре сырой и душной)... 
... Меж каменных домов, средь каменных сердец,
По каменной земле, под небом равнодушным.

XVIII.

Отойди от меня, человек, отойди — я зеваю.
Этой страшной ценой я за жалкую мудрость плачу.
Видишь руку мою, что лежит на столе, как живая —
Разжимаю кулак и уже ничего не хочу.
Move away from me, dear fellow. Don't try to help me.
The sterile pendulous night grows dense above me.
Отойди от меня, человек. Не пытайся помогать.
Надо мной гуляет бесплодная тяжкая ночь.
XIX.

I recall a dull Kishinev evening:
We rounded the Inzovski hillock,
Where Pushkin lived once. A wretched hill,
Where a curly-headed, short official lived -
A celebrated drinker and rake -
With the passionate eyes of a Moor
In his ugly and animated face.

Beyond the dusty, sullen, dead Aziatic,
Along the rigid walls of the Maternity Home,
They carried on the a dead Jew on stretchers.
Beneath an unwashed funeral cover
The bony outlines of a man,
Picked bare by life, could be seen
So picked bare, apparently,
That the lean maggots of the Jewish cemetery
Have nothing to profit from.

Behind the old men, who carried the litter,
Went a small group of big-eyed,
Greenish-yellow, Mane-Katz Jews.
From their moldy long overcoats
Exuded a mixture of holiness and fate.
A Jewish smell - of destitution and sweat,
Of herring, moths, and roasted onions,
Of sacred books, of diapers and the synagogue.

---

9 The term "lapserdaks" refers to the traditional long overcoats worn by Jews.
XIX.
Я помню тусклый кишиневский вечер:
Мы огибали Инзовскую горку,
Где жил когда-то Пушкин. Жалкий холм,
Где жил курчавый низенький чиновник —
Прославленный кутила и повеса —
С горячими арапскими глазами
На некрасивом и живом лице.
За пыльной, хмурой, мертвой Азиатской,
Вдоль жестких стен Родильного Приюта,
Несли на палках мертвого еврея.
Под траурным несвежим покрывалом
Костлявые виднелись очертанья
Обладанного жизнью человека.
Обладанного, видимо, настолько,
Что после нечём было пожитьсь
Худым червям еврейского кладбуша.
За стариками, несшими носилки,
Шла кучка мане-кацовских евреев,
Зеленовато-жёлтых и глазастых.
От их заплесневелых лапсердаков⁹
Шел сложный запах святости и рока,
Еврейский запах — нищеты и пота,
Селедки, моли, жареного лука,
Священных книг, пеленок, синагоги.

⁹ The term "laspersdaks" refers to the traditional long overcoats worn by Jews.
Their hearts\textsuperscript{10} were gladdened with a great sorrow -
And they went with an inaudible step,
Obedient, light, measured and unhurried,
As if they had followed the corpse for years,
As if there wasn't a beginning to their procession,
As if there wasn't an end to it... Their gait was one
Of Zionist Kishinev sages.

Before them - behind the sad, black burden
Walked a woman, and in the dusty semi-darkness
Her face was not visible to us.

But how beautiful was her high voice!

\textsuperscript{10} Although the word "heart" is in the singular, since it refers to the group of Jews processing at
the funeral, I have chosen to translate this logically in the plural, rather than the singular. - CEJ
Большая скорбь им веселила сердце —
И шли они неслышною походкой,
Покорной, легкой, мерной и неспешной,
Как будто шли они за трупом годы,
Как будто нет их шествию начала,
Как будто нет ему конца... Походкой
Сионских — кишиневских — мудрецов.

Пред ними — за печальным черным грузом
Шла женщина, и в пыльном полумраке
Невидно было нам ее лицо.

Но как прекрасен был высокий голос!
To the accompaniment of thumping steps, to the sound
of the weak rustling
Of fallen leaves, of trash, to the sound of coughing
There poured forth a still unheard song.
In it were tears of sweet humility
And devotion to the everlasting will of God
And in it was the rapture of submissiveness and terror...

Oh, how beautiful was her high voice!

It sang, not of a thin dead Jew,
Who bounced on a litter,
It sang of me,
Of us, of everyone, of the vanity of all things and mortal coils,
Of old-age, sorrow and terror,
Of pity, of futility and bewilderment
Of the eyes of dying children...
Под стук шагов, под слабое шуршанье
Опавших листьев, мусора, под кашель
Лилась еще неслыханная песнь.
В ней были слезы сладкого смиренья,
И преданность предвечной воле Божьей,
В ней был восторг покорности и страха...

О, как прекрасен был высокий голос!

Не о худом еврее, на носилках
Подпрыгивавшем, пел он — обо мне,
О нас, о всех, о суете, о праке,
О старости, о горести, о страхе,
О жалости, тщете, недоуменьи,
О глазках умирающих детей...
The Jewish woman walked, not stumbling,
And each time, when those carrying the corpse
Tripped on a cruel stone, she
Rushed with a cry to the corpse - and her voice
Suddenly would ring out, strong and true,
It sounded out a threat to God,
And rejoiced in furious curses.
And the woman threatened him with her fists
He, who hovered in a greenish sky,
Above the dusty trees, above the corpse,
Above the roof of the Maternity Home,
Above the tough, gnarled earth.

But lo - the woman became afraid,
And she beat her breast, and she became numb,
And she repented hysterically and in a prolonged manner,
She praised God's will, in a scared state,
She cried out in frenzy of forgiveness,
Of faith, of humility, of faith,
She jumped aside and prostrated herself on the ground,
Beneath the burden of insufferable eyes
Sorrowfully and sternly looking down from the sky.

What was it? A quiet evening, a fence, a star,
A great dust... My poetry in "The Courier",
A trusting school girl, Olga,
A simple ritual of Jewish burial,
And a woman from the Book of Life.\footnote{11}

\footnote{11}The term "Book of Life" refers to the first book of the Bible, Genesis.
Еврейка шла, почти не спотыкаясь,
И каждый раз, когда жестокий камень
Подбрасывал на палках труп, она
Бросалась с криком на него — и голос
Вдруг ширился, крепчал, звучал металлом,
Торжественно гудел угрозой Богу
И веселел от яростных проклятий.
И женщина грозила кулаками
Тому, Кто плыл в зеленоватом небе,
Над пыльными деревьями, над трупом,
Над крышею Родильного Приюта,
Над жесткою, корявою землей.
Но вот — пугалась женщина себя,
И была в грудь себя, и леденела,
И каялась надрывно и протяжно,
Испуганно хвалила Божью волю,
Кричала иступленно о прощении,
О вере, о смирении, о вере,
Шарахалась и ежилась к земле
Под тяжестью невыносимых глаз,
Глядевших с неба скорбно и сурово.

Что было? Вечер, тишь, забор, звезда,
Большая пыль... Мои стихи в "Курьере",
Доверчивая гимнастика Оля,
Простой обряд еврейских похорон
И женщина из Книги Бытия.11

11 The term "Book of Life" refers to the first book of the Bible, Genesis.
But never can I say the words
About what it was that hovered over Aziatic Street,
Above the street lamps on the urban outskirts,
Above the laughter supressed in doorways,\textsuperscript{12}
Above the bold tones of an unknown guitar,
God knows where, that rumbles over the barking
Of miserable, melancholic dogs.

...A particular Jewish-Russian air...
Blessed be the one who has ever breathed it.

\textsuperscript{12} Although I use the term "doorways", the actual meaning refers to the spaces in between the gates and the ground, which does not have a specific meaning in English. The in-between spaces where laughter would lurk from a Western point of view would be a "doorway".

272
Although I use the term "doorways", the actual meaning refers to the spaces in between the gates and the ground, which does not have a specific meaning in English. The in-between spaces where laughter would lurk from a Western point of view would be a "doorway".

273
XX.

It's been a long time since I've written poetry.  
I am growing old - and there is not a trace of  
The cheerful facility with which I once wrote verse.  
Now my every word is heavier than stones to me.  
It has been a long time already - I take my own little writing hand  
With difficulty and reluctance,  
Not to write business letters,  
Nor bills for linen, which is given to the laundry woman,  
Nor a telephonic address - but poetry.  
It's been a long time since I have written poetry,  
But having only just parted with a person,  
Whom still, not so long ago  
I so loved, like only children,  
Animals, poets and cripples love;  
But having only just parted with a man,  
An entirely pleasant, but quite unnecessary man,  
I suddenly crouched at the table, got some paper  
And I try - I don't know myself what for -  
And for whom, about what - almost not knowing,  
In a cold and calm despair,  
I still try to write poetry.
XX.

Уже давно я не писал стихов.
Старею я — и легкости веселой,
С которой я писал стихи когда-то,
Уж нет в помине. Камня тяжелее
Мне ныне слово каждое мое.
Уже давно — с трудом и неохотой
Беру я самопишущую ручку,
Чтобы писать не письма деловые,
Не счет белья, сдаваемого прачке,
Не адрес телефонный, а — стихи.
Уже давно я не писал стихов,
Но, только что расставшись с человеком,
Которого еще совсем недавно
Я так любил, как любят только дети,
Животные, поэты и каккие-
Но, только что расставшись с человеком,
Вполне приятным, но совсем ненужным,
Я вдруг присел к столу, достал бумагу
И пробую — не знаю сам, зачем —
И для кого, о чем — почти не знаю,
В отчаянья, холодном и спокойном,
Я пробую еще писать стихи.
Now, on the roofs of a sleeping Paris
Lies a nocturnal sky made of felt.
In the metro Parisiens still lose their wits,
Beneath the streetlamps, in alcoves, about doorways,
Created people, on account of a stereotype
Monotonously will whisper and crowd together.
Behind windows, not tightly closed - à la Parisenne -
Love, sadness, sumissiveness, fear and grief,
Hope, sensuality and boredom
With some sort of primordial turbid pile,
Stir in the drowsiness...
Сейчас на крышах спящего Парижа
Лежит ночное войлочное небо.
В метро еще дуреют парижане,
Под фонарями, в нишах, у подъездов,
По трафарету созданные люди
Однообразно шепчутся и жмутся.
За окнами, неплотно — по-парижски —
Прикрытыми, шевелятся в дремоте
Какой-то первозданной мутной кучей —
Любовь, печаль, покорность страх и горе,
Надежда, сладострастие и скука...
Beyond the windows of sleeping Parisian streets
Sleep people who are brothers,
Gathering their strength
For the new day of a week, a year, a life,
For a new day...
But now it is irretrievably clear to me,
That our life is senseless and is a lie.

I toss at the world these hurried words
With a bottle - in verses
Of bottomless human indifference,
Like a bottle into the ocean,
I toss a hushed cry, strongly stopped up,
A cry of my destruction - mine and yours.

But whether the wave of fate wears out the flimsy bit of paper,
When, to whom, and in what sort of human hands and whether
With indistinct and trite words
(And in a strange language, perhaps!)
Of what we had lured by deception
To barren, arid deserts
And what we had left to the mercy of fate
And it is not worth supressing our fear and hunger,
And it is not worth quenching our thirst.

I throw these hopeless words
Into the vast ocean depths,
With the dim hope of salvation,
Not knowing myself, what the word "help" means,
Not understanding - how, when, from where
It would come to me still.
За окнами парижских сонных улиц
Спят люди—братья, набираясь сил
На новый день недели, года, жизни,
На новый день...
А мне сейчас непоправимо ясно,
Что наша жизнь — бессмысленность и ложь.

Я эти тропливые слова
Бросаю в мир — бутылкою — в стихии
Бездонного людского равнодушья,
Бросаю, как бутылку в океан,
Безнадёжный крик, закупоренный крепко,
О гибели моей, моей и вашей.

Но донесёт ли и — когда, кому,
В какие, человеческие ль, руки,
Волна судьбы непрочную бумажку
С невнятными и стертвыми словами
(И на чужом, быть может, языке!)
О том, что мы завлечены обманом
В бесплодные, без водные пустыни
И брошеные на произвол судьбы.
И нечем нам смирить наш страх и голод,
И нашу жажду нечем утолить.

Я эти безнадёжные слова
Бросаю в необъятные пучины,
Со смутной надеждой на спасенье,
Не зная сам, что значит слово — помощь,
Не понимая — как, когда, откуда
Она ко мне прийти б еще могла.
And tomorrow my doppelganger and substitute,
Will occupy himself anew with various matters,
He will write me two and three postcards,
Politely take leave of friends
And inquire: "How are you, how is your health,
Ah, is that your son?" And he shall say:
"Come on over..."
And on the whole, he will observe me everywhere -
My calm, reliable, masculine friend.

Only from time to time, but truthfully, very rarely,
In his eyes, almost without expression -
Glimmers, like a shade, an elusive trace of
The most quiet, but a heavy catastrophe,
That passed unnoticed by the newspapers.
...As if the shadow of a tragic flag,
That would struggle like a big, feeble bird
At that resonant, inspired, fearful hour
Is the hour of a solitary collapsed life.
А завтра мой двойник и заместитель
Займется снова разными делами,
Напишет за меня две–три открытки,
Раскланяется вежливо с знакомым
И спросит: “Как живете, как – здоровье,
Что – мальчик ваш?” И скажет: “Приходите…”
И, в общем, соблюдает меня повсюду –
Спокойный, тверды, мужественный друг.

Лишь изредка, но, правда, очень редко,
В его глазах – почти без выраженья –
Мелькнет, как тень, неуловимый отблеск
Тишиной, но тяжестью катастрофы,
Прошедшей незаметно для газет.
...Как будто тень трагического флага,
Что билась бы большой бессильной птицей
В тот гулкий, вдохновенный, страшный час –
Час одинокого жизнекрушенья.
CHAPTER 7

Насущная любовь

Love's Sustenance

(1938)
I.

Excessive hunger awakens us in the morning
And ancient greed rages in the still dense blood...
Oh, how it gives us joy: to offer - with a merry hand - -
All our dreams for a crumb of bread and love.

But the satiation escapes us! Beneath the indifferent sky
We are every day exhausted anew,
Giving back everything for a crust, a crust of bread
And a stale, urgent love.

II. Midnight

A clock at a nearby lyceé strikes midnight.
Behind a symmetrical lattice pattern a garden breathes.
Beautiful is the magic row of lanterns.
Beneath a peaceful sky my heart turns rigid.

This sound - in the midst of a symphony of peace,
An implacable peace - will never be repeated.
Here a poet went along the streets of the capital,
(Lost, like a dog among the snows....)

He went along, unable to reconcile himself with God,
And the solitary tread of his steps
Bore witness to the burden - of words,
Which never can be embodied.

---

1 This poem forms the prologue to the main body of the cycle both in the original 1938 edition and in the reprints.
2 The participle is of course the past active, but the present participle sounds better in English.
3 Here Knut uses the term for a French high school, i.e. "lycée".
I. 1

Нас утром будет непомерный голод
И жадность древняя в еще густой крови...
О, как нам радостно отдать — рукой веселой —
Все сны за крохи хлеба и любви.

Но не насытиться! Под равнодушным небом
Мы каждый день изнемогаем вновь,
Отдавший все за корку, корку хлеба
И черствую насущную любовь.

II. Полночь

Бьет полночь близко на часах лицея.3
За стройною решеткой дышит сад.
Прекрасен фонарь волшебный ряд.
Под мирным небом сердце цепенеет.

Вот этот звук — в симфонии миров
Безжалостный — вовек не повторится:
Здесь шел поэт по улицам столицы
(Затерянный, как пес среди снегов...).

Он шел, не в силах с Богом примириться,
И одинокий стук его шагов
О времени свидетельствовал — слов,
Которым никогда не воплотиться.

---

1 This poem forms the prologue to the main body of the cycle both in the original 1938 edition and in the reprints.
2 The participle is of course the past active, but the present participle sounds better in English.
3 Here Knut uses the term for a French high school, i.e. "lycée".
III. Tidings

I cannot stay awake today - and I cannot get to sleep.
A dead moon hangs above the roof.
How my soul tosses and turns... It dreams of the end of the world,
And it comforts the world with love.

These tidings shall reach someone. Still not comprehending
A brother's signal from obscure lands of goodness,
Some half-dead soul suddenly shall be gladdened - -
My anonymous friend, my brother, my sister.
III. Весть

Не бодрствуется мне сегодня − и не спится.
Висит над крышей мертвая луна.
Как мечется душа... Ей гибель мира снится,
И утешает мир любовью она.

К кому-то весть дойдет. Еще не понимая
Сигнала братского из темных стран добра,
Обрадуется вдруг душа полуживая −
Мой безымянный друг, мой брат, моя сестра.

286
IV. Destitution

We were able to distinguish little by little
False words from genuine ones.
We forgot how to cry and shout,
We came to love the perishing and the fallen
And everything became more strident, more difficult,
And sterner and simpler,
Words more meager, the silence - more tender...

... I went out to the deserted square --
The world is still the same: a row of lamps is blossoming forth,
Night is overtaking the city and suburbs,
Above the world dead stars burn
With beautiful, terrible, merciless tidings.

Oh, sensitive is the hearing and keen the arrogant gaze
Of those who are abandoned and solitary...
But there is still - the excruciating setting of the sun,
Beloved merciless, relentless lines of verse.
Still frequently a human being's glance
And wordless handshake
Lighten our burdens and shame
Of our biblical, cruel curse.
In daily sweat and in the coldness of night
Ever more bitter is the astringent taste of love and bread.
And lo - in our final destitution --
We avoid peering at the sky:
In the wilderness of the world the skies are deaf
To faint rebellious voices
That perish in the blue music of the universe...

O, blessed be our poverty.
IV. Ницца

Мы постепенно стали отличать
Поддельные слова от настоящих.
Мы разучились плакать и кричать,
Мы полюбили гибнувших и падших.
И стало все прознительней, трудней,
И стало все суровее и проще,
Слова — бедней, молчание — нежней...

...Я вышел на пустеющую площадь —
Все тот же мир: цветет фонарный ряд,
Ночь настигает город и предместье,
Над миром звезды мертвые горят
Прекрасной страшной беспощадной вестью.

О, чуток слух и эрэч надменный взгляд
Тех, что заброшены и одиноки...
Но есть еще — мучительный закат,
Любимые безжалостные строки.
Еще нередко человечий взор
И молчаливое рукопожатье
Нам облегчают тяжесть и позор
Библейского жестокого проклятья.
В дневном поту и в холоде ночей
Все горше терпкий вкус любви и хлеба.
И вот — в последней нищете своей —
Мы избегаем вглядываться в небо:
В пустыне мира глухи небеса
К слабеющим мятежным голосам,
Что гибнут в синей музыке вселенной...

О, бедность наша будь благословена.

288
V. Autumnal Port

A ship sails off into the ocean,
Emitting smoke through a new smokestack.
The captain, quarrelsome and stern,
Shouts in the deck cabin.

And inebriation with aimless travel
Strikes the heart
But there is no more absurd word than: goal -
In the merry wind of calamities.

Ships go off into the sea,
Everything in the world goes away.
Earthly women pass by, but
You shall no longer meet them.

Meanwhile, perhaps, among them,
Who knows - who shall find out? - -
She passed by... (But here garrulous verse
Modestly lapses into silence.)

Trains took to the field
The weight of joy and pain.
They go away for all time.
You won't see any more of them.

And people, beyond the window look at
A painting of foul weather,
Where a modest house that did not recognize happiness
Sadly dwindles away.

---

4 The word "бранчивый" is interesting because it can be found both with and without the "л". Both spellings mean quarrelsome.
5 Obsolete word: "боле" This is an obsolete form of "более" (adv.), or "more".
V. Осенний порт

Корабль уходит в океан,
Дымя трубою новой.
Кричит на рубке капитан,
Бранчливыж 4 и суровый.

У ударяет в сердце хмель
Бесцельных путешествий.
Но нет смешнее слова: цель —
В веселом ветре бедствий.

Уходят в море корабли,
Уходят все на свете.
Проходят женщины земли,
Ты больше их не встретишь.

Меж тем, быть может, срединих,
Кто знает — кто узнает? —
Прошла...(Но тут болтливый стих
Стыдливо умолкает.)

Увозят в поле поезда
Груз радости и боли.
Они уходят навсегда.
Их не увидишь более.5

И смотрят люди, за окном,
На живопись ненастья,
Где грустно тает скромный дом
Неузнанного счастья.

4 The word “бранчливый” is interesting because it can be found both with and without the “л”. Both spellings mean quarrelsome.
5 Obsolete word: "боле " This is an obsolete form of "более" (adv.), or "more".
Idle lights went by...
But the cursed train
Transports us to where only
Mists and clouds await.

And the steam engine whistles, threatens
The autumnal soporific cornfields.
A happy automobile
Flies across his path\(^6\)

And builds up speed - and look here
The long account of love and a difficult quarrel
Has deftly turned over
But it is not over yet...

---

\(^6\) The word "наперёд" (adv.) (also prep. + dative case), means "so as to cross one's path."
Прошли напрасные огни...
А поезд окаянный
Везет туда, где ждут одни
Туманы и обманы.

И паровоз свистит, грозит
Осенью сонным нивам.
Ему наперерез летит
Автомобиль счастливый.

И ускоряет ход — и вот
Перевернулся споро,
И не закончен долгий счет
Любви и сложной ссоры...

---

6 The word "наперерез" (adv.) (also prep. + dative case), means "so as to cross one's path."
VI. Contradictions

They remained - - those who were intending to go,
They returned - - those who went off forever.
A brisk misfortune set in, bustling about
In the lofty home of maidenly laughter.

She lives for ages - a lifeless Gioconda\(^7\)
Those who swore fidelity to each other have separated.
And those that met in the morning on the tram,
Are already doomed to a life of loving.

The wealthy one doesn't know the price of happiness,
And the one who knows is poor, weak and destitute.
The delights of the world are fraught with sorrow,
But wisdom loves the grief of burnt hearths...

And, understanding nothing at all,
It happens, at a fatal nocturnal hour,
That I grasp a kind of sense now and then,
A shade of truth suddenly will appear fleetingly before\(^8\) me.

But I don't know how to tell another of this,.
But I cannot verbally convey my experience.
And therefore I am embarrassed - and I turn rigid,
I keep silent, blaspheme and tell lies.

---

\(^7\) The term "Gioconda" is a clear reference to "La Gioconda", the famous Mona Lisa.
\(^8\) Poetic form.
VI. Противоречья

Остались — собирающиеся ехать,
Вернулись — кто уехал навсегда.
В высоком доме девичьего смеха
Захлопотала юркая беда.

Живет века — Джоконда⁷ неживая.
Растались те, что в верности клялись.
А те, что утром встретились в трамвае,
Уже обречены любви на жизнь.

Цены не знает радости богатый,
А тот, кто знает — беден, слаб и ниц.
Отрады мира скорбию чреваты,
А мудрость любит горест пепелищ...

И, ничего ни в чем не понимая,
Случается, в час гибельный, ночной,
Порой я смссл какой-то постигаю,
Тень правды вдруг мелькнет передо⁸ мной.

Но рассказать другому не умею.
Но передать словами не могу,
И потому смущен — и цепенею,
Безмолвствую, кощунствую и лгу.

---

⁷ The term "Gioconda" is a clear reference to "La Gioconda", the famous Mona Lisa.
⁸ Poetic form.
VII. Be Silent...

1.

About eternal melancholy,
About our first meeting,
About the passion in our glances,
About the happiness in our eyes,
On the bottom of which are
The fastidiousness and fear,
Of stocky, sated, dense souls,
Of everyday, boring, unshaven saints.
Be silent, about the thousands of lives, of deaths,
    of rough calamities,
That sank to a dullness without any consequences...

About the unexpected song,
Of taunted sleepers,
About the tramway-like happiness,
Haunted, fleetingly glimpsed.
(A tram car is on the outskirts,
By a summer passed.
Evening was, and there was a wind --
Quite, like Blok has...
Spirits, Gala-Peter,
Of a sharp little bell...) 
About much set free,
Gay and frightful,
About a great deal
And any,
About a cripple --
VII. Молчи...

1.
О грусти вечной,
О первой встречной,
О страсти во взорах,
О счасти в глазах,
На дне которых
Брезгливость и страх,
О душах приземистых, сытых, густых,
О будничных скучных небритых святых.
О тысячах жизней, смертей, бурных бедствий,
Что канули в серость без всяких последствий...

О песне нечаянной,
Спящих кольнувшейся,
О счастье трамвайно,
Пропавшем, мелькнувшем.
(Трамвай — на окраину,
Летом минувшим.
Был вечер, и ветер —
Совсем, как у Блока...
Души, Гала-Петер,
Звоночек жесткий...)
О многом пустяшном,
Веселом и страшном,
О многом
И всяком,
Убогом —
And of various, 
Ordinary, 
Fully unadorned, 
Decent 
But all the same not quite possible - -

Be silent about an imprisoned life, 
About an irreligious death...

2.

About those whom I didn't meet, 
Whom I didn't notice, 
Who - like a fellow-traveler in a train- 
Is lost, forever, in the night.

About those, whom I didn't meet, 
To whom I did not respond, 
About those necessary to me, about those promised to me, 
be silent,

My pen, keep silent.

... About those whom I shall not meet, 
Of whom I shall not take notice, 
To whom I shall not respond...
И разном,
Одноком,
Однако,
Вполне безобразном,
Приличном,
Но, все же, совсем невозможном —

О жизни острожной,
О смерти безбожной...

2.
О тех, кого не встретил,
Кого я не заметил,
Кто — как попутчик в поезде — навек пропал в ночи.

О тех, кого не встретил,
Кому я не ответил,
О нужных мне, обещанных, молчи, перо, молчи.

...О тех, кого не встречу,
Кого я не замечу,
Кому я не отвечу...
VIII. Rain

How the rain lashes down... And in the cosy room --
Is a poet. Before him on the table is paper.
From this simplicity, almost a tiny cabin
He feels himself on a some sort of ship
... He forgot his name,
He forgot, where he is going and for what,
In a senseless, beautiful home
He writes to all - to which - to these - to those...
Years shall pass... And there the letter of the poet
Shall arrive and at the necessary home, and at the necessary hour --
He shall not hear of the tardy response,
He shall not see the grateful gazes
But with an enthusiastically-sad joy,
He wears down his anxious blood already
His influx of initial love:
A reply to their future love.
VIII. Дождь

Как хлещет дождь... А в комнате уютной —
Поэт. Пред ним бумага на столе.
От этой простоты, почти каютной,
Он чувствует себя на корабле
Каком-то... Он забыл его название,
Забыл, куда он едет — и зачем,
В бессмысленном, прекрасном уповании
Он пишет всем — которым — этим — тем...
Пройдут годы... И вот письмо поэта
Придет и в нужный дом, и в нужный час —
Он не услышит позднего ответа,
Он не увидит благодарных глаз.
IX. Dialogues

I.

- - At times the smaller of a little trifle
(The cheaper of all doctors and pharmacies):
Two drops of tenderness, a pinch of compassion- -
And there - a dried up man blossomed.

He blossomed - a dried up half-dead man - he came to life,
And a merry good deed entered the world.

- - You are right, my friend. Love is dearest of all,
But I don't have money for the metro.

II.

- - We shall recognize each other by our eyes,
By our nothing-so-significant words,
(In our eyes is the insane grief of the sighted,
In our words is the shamefulness of the fallen righteous persons),
And in the world of evil riddles and insults
Much that is dismal links us:
A carelessness, that is similar to despair,
A placid rage (like the honor, to take care of it!),
Words, that are more silent than silence,
A silence, more similar to speech...

Yes, that is so. I myself am of the same opinion,
But I am rushing off to work now, unfortunately.
IX. Диалоги

1.
—Порою меньше малой малости
(Дешевле всех врачей и всех аптек):
Две капли нежности, щепотку жалости —
И вот расцвел засохший человек.

Расцел — засохший, полумертвый — ожил,
И в мир вошло веселое добро.

—Вы правы, друг. Любовь всего дороже,
Но у меня нет денег на метро.

2.
—Мы узнаем друг друга по глазам,
По ничего-не-значающим словам
(В глазах — безумье горестное эрзич,
В словах — стыдливость праведников падших),
И в мире злых загадок и обид
Нас многое, печальное, роднит:
Беспечность, что похоже на отчаянье,
Спокойный гнев (как честь, его беречь!),
Слова, что молчаливее молчания,
Молчание, похожее на речь...

—Да, это — так, Я сам того же мненья,
Но я спешу на службу, к сожаленью.
3.

- - Oh, if we only had known...
  - - I am cutting you off,
       Say, dear one, what time is it?
- - So we forget...
  - - Pardon me, for the evil,
I shall recall the day, but I forgot the date.

... Each day is such: for myself, Each day of itself is such
In vicious human fate.

4.
You say to me: love and friendship,
Poetry, art, brotherly duty,
But I shall reply: calendar and service,
And my brother is a ram, and my brother is a donkey and a wolf.

Love is fraught with tedium or betrayal,
And duty - love reminds us about duties.
And, my friend, we shall humbly prefer
(Metaphorical...) boots to friendship.

Two voices:

-- Live, stubbornly create.
-- Why, you fool?
Stay, submit.

But death shall recognize all - with a shameful end -
An end like life never humbled.
3.
- О, если б знали мы...
  - Я прерываю вас,
Скажите, дорогой, который час?
- Так забываем мы...
  - Простите, как на зло,
Я помню день, но позабыл число.

...Так – каждый: для себя, так – каждый о себе
В порочной человеческой судьбе.

4.
Вы говорите мне: любовь и дружба,
Пoesия, искусство, братский долг,
Но я отвечаю: календарь и служба,
И брат – баран, и брат – осел и волк.

Любовь чревата сукой иль изменой,
А долг – напоминает про долги.
И дружбе, друг, мы предпочтем смиренно
(Метафорические...) сапоги.

Два голоса:
- Живи, твори упорно.
- Зачем, глупец?
Остановись, смирись.

Но всех унизит смерть – концом позорным –
Как никогда не унижала жизнь.
X. Romance

My handsome friend, hopes grow weaker.
My unhappy friend, it is time to confess:
You drew us into a fool's venture.
My friend, the game has not been run cleanly.

Clever boys were also known to us, my friend,
Afterwards - the gravediggers\textsuperscript{10}, thieves, barbers\textsuperscript{11},
Proud children and droll fathers
They all will be dolts just the same.

Those very raptures, the same complaints
They disturbed people working and sleeping.
Those very ones ... the same one ... in the same way... and, it became
Necessary to hold out, to be a bit more silent.

A shameful life, for a suitable romance,
That one, which a gypsy woman sings:
The barren years, the interminable pain,
Your incinerated happiness...

\textsuperscript{9} This refers to the musical term, a "romance", i.e. a simple, lyrical song or instrumental piece.
\textsuperscript{10} Obsolete term.
\textsuperscript{11} Obsolete term.
XI. РОПМАНС

Друг мой прекрасный, надежды слабеют.
Друг мой несчастный, признаться пора:
Нас вовлеки в шутовскую затею.
Друг мой, нечесто ведется игра.

Друг, и до нас были эннатные умники,
После - такие же будут глупцы,
Гробокопатели,10 воры, цирюльники,11
Гордые дети, смешные отцы.

Те же восторги, такие же жалобы
Людям мешали работать и спать
Те же... такое же... так же... и, стало быть,
Надо крепиться, побольше молчать.

Стыдная жизнь, для романса природная,
Та, о которой цыганка поет:
Годы бесплодные, боль безысходная,
Испепеленное счастье твое...

_______________________________
9 This refers to the musical term, a "romance", i.e. a simple, lyrical song or instrumental piece.
10 Obsolete term.
11 Obsolete term.
XI. Lie

Vast cheerful factories,
Where, in the panic of shameful labor,
Besotted depraved persons toil about,
Making noise, buzzing and shaking cities --

Look at them -- and you shall see a lie,
And again, a hundred times more, you shall see a lie,
Look at them - and you shall understand at once,
That all is incomprehensible in this world.

Love and faithfulness, devotion and honor,
These words are in a radiant, aged aureole,
But that means: fear, deceit and vengeance,
And even evil days of brutality and pain.

And all the same, you feebly believe: Perhaps...
Still you wait for someone, you want something...
My friend, how difficult it is to live as a human being
(Especially, when you are a night person)\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{12}\) Although the Russian use here is the future perfective, the sense is more that this being is a 'creature of night', a "night person" - i.e. How difficult it is to live as a human being (presumably during the day) when you are really only "awake" at night.
XI. Ложь

Шумят, гудят, трясутся города —
Огромные веселые заводы,
Где, в панике позорного труда,
Хлопочут одурелые уроды.

Взгляни на них — и ты увидишь ложь,
И снова — ложь, в повторности стократной,
Взгляни на них — и сразу ты поймешь,
Что все на этом свете не понятно.

Любовь и верность, преданность и честь,
Слова — в лучистом, древнем ореоле,
Но это значит: страх, обман и месть,
Да злые дни жестокости и боли.

И все же, слабо веришь: может быть...
Еще кого-то ждешь, чего-то хочешь...
Мой друг, как трудно человеку жить
(Особенно, когда просешься ночью...)  

12 Although the Russian use here is the future perfective, the sense is more that this being is a 'creature of night', a "night person" - i.e. How difficult it is to live as a human being (presumably during the day) when you are really only "awake" at night.
XII. Café

Two sleepy old men are playing cards,
Bobbing up and down, rejoicing, swearing.
A neighbor, not hurry ing,
Pesters a spinster with mathematical fervor.

In an aquarium
Clockwork jerks modify a hopeless blueprint,
An unsteady city glimmers beyond the window,
And a worldly lie seduces.

We sleep in concert in a dazed throng,
Having forgotten ourselves in belted overcoats.
Incorporeal, featureless male waiters^13
Bring us - somnambulistic ones - some Portuguese wine.^14

We sleep, observing proprieties, duty and faithfulness,
In our sleep -- we wage war, we construct cities...
Oh, if only we would not have to awaken in coldness and excessiveness,
In the despair of soberness, of shame.

---

13 Knut uses the French word "garçon", incorporating a Russian plural ending of " би ". The word "garçon" has a number of meanings: boy, young man, bachelor, waiter, a young worker at certain crafts (i.e. butcher, tailor, hairdresser). This term also can be used in the familiar sense, when addressing persons younger than oneself and also when referring to one's own sons. In this case the interpretation of "male waiters" is used, since the equivalent French term for female servers would be 'serveuse'.

14 Again, Knut uses a French word "porto", which is a wine from Portugal. This wine can be drunk as an apertif or used in cooking.
XII. Кафе

Два спящих старики играют в карты,
Подигравая, радуясь, бранясь.
Сосед, с математическим азартом,
Девичу теребит, не торяся.

В аквариуме заводные рыбки
Варьируют безвыходный чертеж.
А за окном мерцает город зыбкий,
И соблазняет мировая ложь.

Мы дружно спим осоловелым сномом,
Забыв себя в эстетикуых пальто.
Бесплотные, безликие гарсогоны
Несут нам — лунатически — порто.

Мы спим, блюда приличья, долг и верность,
Во сне — вкуем, строим города...
0, не проснуться б... в холод и в безмерность,
В отчаяние трезвости, стыда.

---

13 Knut uses the French word "garçon", incorporating a Russian plural ending of "ы". The word "garçon" has a number of meanings: boy, young man, bachelor, waiter, a young worker at certain crafts (i.e. butcher, tailor, hairdresser). This term also can be used in the familiar sense, when addressing persons younger than oneself and also when referring to one's own sons. In this case the interpretation of "male waiters" is used, since the equivalent French term for female servers would be 'serveuse'.

14 Again, Knut uses a French word "porto", which is a wine from Portugal. This wine can be drunk as an apertif or used in cooking.
XIII. Embankment

Above the Seine, above the crowded quay,
In the colorless sky clouds were warmed.
Two river horns called to one another
With long drawn-out, hoarse, reciprocal boredom.
(So one day Justice's voice shall be heard
An overly peaceful, tedious summons from afar.)

No one knew, why he eats and breathes,
Why he disturbs his own flesh and blood,
Why he works, ails, and writes letters
About various matters and about love...

But they lived so, as if all was in order
(On the whole, the coziest of commotions!)
They lost their nearest and dearest, their soul and their gloves,
They visited friends, built homes.

And they took intoxication\(^{15}\) and household members,\(^{16}\)
Loading, conveying, cursing - like in a dream,
And they weren't scared to stay at night
Alone with themselves — in silence.

---

\(^{15}\) The literal meaning is "fumes", the figurative meaning is "intoxication".
\(^{16}\) Obsolete term.
XIII. Набережная

Над Сеной, над набережной людной,
В бесветном небе грелись облака.
Протяжной скукой, хриплой, обоюдной,
Перекликались два речных гудка.
(Так прозвучит однажды голос Судный
Надмирный, нудный зов издалека.)

Никто не знал, зачем он ест и дышит,
Зачем тревожит плоть свою и кровь,
Работает, болеет, письма пишет
Про разные дела и про любовь.

Но жили так, как будто все в порядке
(Уютнейшая, в общем, кутерьма!),
Теряли близких, душу и перчатки,
Ходили в гости, строили дома.

И заводили чад¹⁵ и домочадцев,¹⁶
Грузя, везя, ругаясь — как во сне,
И не боялись ночью оставаться
С самим собой — в тиши — наедине.

---
¹⁵ The literal meaning is "fumes", the figurative meaning is "intoxication".
¹⁶ Obsolete term.
And in soporific placidity, you must trust,
That no one remembered, that we all shall die,
That we all are unexpectedly seized
By the sturdy hand\textsuperscript{17} of death -- and life.

No one knew, no one remembered -- and no one thought,
In the circulation of affairs, amusements and misfortunes...
And from the darkness of the void -- sleeplessly and sullenly --
The Great Ogre peered at the world.

\textsuperscript{17} Literally the "paw" or jocular form of the human hand.
И в сонной безмятежности, поверьте,
Никто не помнил, что мы все умрем,
Что все мы будем крепколапой17 смертью
Захвачены нежданно — и живем.

Никто не знал, не помнил — и не думал,
В круговороте дел, забав и бед...
Из тьмы пустот — бессонно и угрюмо —
Глядел на мир Великий Людоед.

17 Literally the "paw" or jocular form of the human hand.
XIV. Void

Here dark things are happening in such minutes,
And suddenly the more crowded caves of moleskin are a heavenly expanse.
All the words are more hopeless, all the old insults are more harsh,
And the void grows in a stately fashion around man.

Shall they cry out? But are they only shouting in theaters of the poor quarters.
Shall they run away? But to where? And just how do you run from yourself?
A day - no worse than other days - of the past, the future and the imaginary...
And all around is the unchanging, indifferently-merry Paris.

---

18 Alternative comparative form used mainly in verse, conversational style and casual prose style.
XIV. Пустота

Вот в такие минуты совершаются темные вещи,
И простор поднебесный вдруг тесней подземелья крота,
Все слова безнадежней, все обиды старинные резче,
И вокруг человека величаво растет пустота.

Закричать? Но кричат лишь в театриках бедных кварталов.
Убежать? Но – куда? Да и как от себя убежишь?
День – не хуже других – бывших, будущих и небывалых...
И вокруг – неизменный, равнодушно–веселый Париж.

18 Alternative comparative form used mainly in verse, conversational style and casual prose style.
Part Two
XV. Portrait

On the lacerated background of grey Paris
And indecipherable rainy days,
You illuminated - with your pale blue eyes and red hair --
The commencement of my sad autumn.

You settled with tenderness and light
A cumbersome and intricate landscape --
So, sometimes, in a newspaper, a poet's verse
Suddenly shines forth amidst a list of murders and thefts.

Ambiguous lips are turning pink
On your angelic and shy face.
Your forehead is a trifle low, but it is and dear to me also in that shape, --
It testifies to your wisdom.

Here wisdom is united with youth and happiness,
And gladness is not at all blind.
A crystal of life-giving\textsuperscript{19} beauty
Burns against the background of urban foul weather.

\textsuperscript{19} Obsolete and poetic term - животворящий - life-giving
XV. Портет

Но рваном фоне серого Парижа
И неразборчивых дождливых дней,
Вы озарили — голубым и рыжим —
Начало грустной осени моей.

Вы населили нежностью и светом
Громоздкий и запутанный пейзаж —
Так, иногда, в газете стих поэта
Вдруг засияет средь убийств и краж.

Двусмысленные розовеют губы
На ангельском застенчивом лице.
Чуть низок лоб, но и таким мне люб он, —
Свидетельствующий о мудреце.

Здесь мудрость в дружбе с юностью и счастьем,
А радость — не подруга слепоты.
Горит на фоне городских ненасий
Кристалл животворящей красоты.19

19 Obsolete and poetic term - животворящий - life-giving
XVI. Night

Like three hundred years ago... The medieval air
And the peace of empty lanes,
The crooked street lamps and the thump of steps that do not resonate,
The sadness and sleep of the urban wilderness.

The obscure buildings against the old background of stars...

-- Let's go round to the café (You are not cold, are you?)
There a hoarse lacerated voice shall sing to us
On a gramophone record -- doesn't it sing of our fate?

I knew you for long ago: I foresaw and foreheard you.
I knew that you would come and that you would smile at me.
With that smile of yours (there is none dearer, nor quieter...)
With such trust as if we were in a dream.

Your melancholy forehead and your shoulders
And your tender breath are well-known to me,
I knew you before our strange meeting
And I fell in love with you long ago.

The night, the dark buildings... all around is the same as always.
The tower clock strikes the final hour, it seems.
But the timid radiance of your eyes,
But the melancholy - the endless melancholy - of your uncompromising eyes,

(Oh, proud, rebellious languor...),
But the melancholy and passion of your indomitable eyes
Changed all, transformed all,
Reforged all, liberated the two of us.
XVI. Ночь

Как триста лет назад... Пустынных переулков
Средневековый воздух и покой,
Кривые фонари и стук шагов негулких,
Печаль и сон пустыни городской.

Глухие здания на старом звездном фоне...
— Зайдем в кафе. (Не холодно тебе?)
Там жирлый рванный голос в граммофоне
Споет нам — не о нашей ли судьбе?

Я знал тебя давно: предвидел и предсмыкал.
Я знал, что ты придешь и улыбнешься мне
Своей улыбкою (милее нет, ни — тише...)
С таким доверием, как будто мы во сне.

Знакомы мне твой грустный лоб, и плечи,
И нежное дыхание твоё,
Я знал тебя до нашейстранной встречи
И полюбил тебя давно.

Кругом все то же... Ночь, глухие здания.
На башне бьет как бы последний час.
На глаз твоих стыдливое сияние,
На грусть — без дна — непримиримых глаз

(О, гордое, мятежное бессилье...),
На грусть и страсть неукротимых глаз
Все изменили, все преобразили,
Все переплавили, освободили нас
From a worldly, merciless authority —
For the happiness of a brief urban meeting,
For black happiness without a way out,
And fraught with impassioned anguish.
От мировой, от беспощадной власти —
Для счастья краткой стречи городской,
Для черного безвыводного счастья,
Чреватого горячою тоской.
XVII. Meeting

You will understand nothing, you will not be able to tell anything, 
All shall pass, all shall be lost without a trace. 
But when you return home, return and lie down, 
You will understand: that you will never forget.

I do not remember, what you and I talked about, 
And what is more, I am not seeking for the right words -- those words I 
shall not find. 
I will not be able to tell the story of what happened.... In the train-station 
garden, 
Which didn't afford shelter\(^{20}\), it smelled of linden trees and dust. 

But, it was as if this was foretold to me, 
As if this evening and this meeting, the dots of a vacillating light, 
And an infinite night aloft... 
Were promised to me by someone (I don't recall who it was), sometime, 
somewhere. 

As if this was once promised to me: 
Your insatiable hands, 
The wind, the smell of your hair, the smell of late summer, 
Your sorrowful voice, warmed by loving sorrow, 
The somber air of last love. 

\(^{20}\) The term - бесприютный - means homeless or not affording shelter.
XVII. Встреча

Ничего не поймешь, ни о чем не расскажешь,
Все пройдет, пропадет без следа.
Но вернешься домой, но вернешься — и ляжешь,
И поймешь: не забыть никогда.

Я не помню, о чем мы с тобой говорили,
Да и слов не ищу — не найду.
Ни о чем не расскажешь... Пахло липой и пылью
В бесприютном вокзалом20 саду.

Но как будто мне было предсказано это,
Будто были обещаны мне
Кем-то (кем — я не помню...), когда-то и где-то —
Этот вечер и встреча, пятна зыбкого света,
Беспредельная ночь в вышине...

Будто было когда-то обещано это:
Ненасытные руки твои,
Ветер, запах волос, запах позднего лета,
Скорбный голос, любовною скорбью согретый,
Темный воздух последней любви.

20 The term - бесприютный - means homeless or not affording shelter.
XVIII. Of Love, Of Fate...

The dusty smell of foliage, and a black tree trunk above a green bench. Houses, fatigued by the day, sleep their stony deep sleep. A grey darkness is spreading, night is drawing near — Moved by enormous sadness -- a growing mass of grief.

In the world misfortune walks about, the wind ambles and bad weather ripens. Sorrow hovers above the world and hotly breathes on us. But a precarious happiness beats a pitter-patter in quivering hands, And weary hands carry my excessive happiness.

Like yesterday, so today we shall part soon. And, weakening in the struggle with many-faced and somber fate, After days and nights of lying, of humility, of labor and shame, We shall catch sight of each other again at the predestined evening.

And afterwards a day will come (and, believe me, it shall come, it will come), A day will come, one that is like others (no one shall understand our tears...), When I shall not come to our meeting, or perhaps it will be you When someone, won't ever come to anybody.

And of our discourses, and of our cruel joy, And of our nights - all that will remain perhaps, will be verses, Only a handful of words, old-fashioned shameful lines, About love, about fate, about love, about you, about love.
XVIII. О любви, о судьбе...

Пыльный запах листвы, черный ствол над скамейкой зеленой. 
Крепким лёгким сном спят уставшие за день дома. 
Нарастающей массой печали — и грустью огромной — 
Надвигается ночь, разливается серая тьма.

В мире ходит беда, бродит ветер и зреют ненастья.  
Скорь витает над миром и дышит на нас горячо. 
А в дрожащих руках бьется—бьется непрочное счастье, 
А в усталых руках — непосильное счастье мое.

Как вчера, мы сегодня с тобою расстанемся скоро. 
И, слабея в борьбе с многоликой и темной судьбой, 
После дней и ночей — лжи, смиренья, труда и позора, 
Мы в назначенный вечер увидимся снова с тобой.

А потом будет день (и, поверь, он придет, он настанет), 
День — такой, как другие (никто наших слез не поймет...), 
Когда я не приду или ты не придешь на свиданье, 
Когда кто-то уже никогда ни к кому не придет.

И от наших речей, и от радости нашей жестокой, 
И от наших ночей — ухаживают, быть может, стихи, 
Только горсточка слов, старомодные стыдные строки 
О любви, о судьбе, о любви, о тебе, о любви.
XIX. A Stroll

A simple agonizing tale
Of a rural night in September:
You walked next to me, my living conscience,
You were snuggling up sorrowfully to me.

The sublime, empty night was growing lighter...
You walked with me, and behind you, following you, --
Madness, melancholy, a kind of marvelous light,
Whirled around — a clandestine and timid flock,

As if a weak reflection of mournful wings...
You are next to me, you, oh, my beloved friend...
We walked along in silence. Oh the terrible weakness
Of those lost in the desert of the world...

Two people -- in a fateful whirl
Of all-consuming nocturnal elements...
And each sigh and each movement --
Is love, is from love --by love -- about love.

Oh, how we loved, oh, how we pitied
All those doomed to destruction and darkness,
And those who cried, and those who sang
And those who are powerless, and those who are proud and courageous.

How we pitied assassins, orphans, stepchildren and stepmothers,
All the joyful people - in their innocence,
All those who are lonely, all the blind and all the sighted,
And even all the birds, stones and wild beasts.

328
XIX. Прогулка

Несложная мучительная повесть
О деревенской ночи в сентябре:
Ты рядом шла, моя живая совесть
Ты прижималась горестно ко мне.

Светлела ночь, высокая, пустая...
Ты шла со мной, и за тобой вслед
Кружились - тайной и пугливой стаей -
Безумье, русть, какой-то дивный свет,

Как будто слабый отблеск скорбных крыльев...
Ты - рядом, ты, о друг любимый мой...
Мы молча шли. О страшное бессилье
Затерянных в пустыне мировой...

Два человека - в роковом круженьи
Ночных всепожирающих стихий...
И каждый вздох и каждое движенье -
Любовь - любви - любовью - о любви.

О, как любили мы, о, как жалели
Всех обреченных гибели и тьме,
И тех, что плакали, и тех, что пели,
Тех, кто беспомощен, и тех, кто горди смел.

Убийц, сирот, и паынков, и мачех,
Всех радостных - в невинности своей,
Всех одиноких, всех слепых и зрячих,
И даже птиц, и камни, и зверей.
... High up the very same stars flickered
Above everything pitiable in this world.
We walked in the majestic and menacing night,
I feel like living, I feel like dying.
...Вверху все те же трепетали звезды
Над всем, что в мире надо пожалеть.
Мы шли в ночи, торжественной и грозной,
Хотелось жить, хотелось умереть.
XX. Dream

In a green room, in a dim light,
To the accompaniment of an unearthly gramophone voice,
To the accompaniment of an insistent gramophone tune,
My friends made noise and with me --

Was the secret queen of the meaningless banquet --
You sat there among them, you breathed next to me.
(Your most delicate features exuded
All the languor, wisdom, melancholy and charm of the world.)

Nothing stirred in my stern face,
When I understood: that you were mine, all mine.
I heard the caress of a dear voice,
And happiness crept up, like a snake.

Oh, how it stung! To last to the end of life. I rose unhurriedly,
So as to tell my associates,
That I love you - with an inexpressible love,
And you love me to the grave, unto death.

-- Friends, associates!... Their arguments, and loud laughter ceased.
-- Friends, -- I said, just a trifle pale...
But in the crowded room suddenly a deafening noise was heard,
A flame flashed -- and hit me in the chest,

I awoke at once... My alarm clock was still trembling from the sound,
It was still rattling on the table.
And beyond my window -- above a green cloud --
The sun rose in pre-dawn morning mist.
XX. Сон

В зеленой комнате, в неясном освещеньи,
Под граммофонный голос неземной,
Под граммофонное припевчивое пенье,
Мои друзья шумели, и со мной —

Царица тайная бессмысленного пира —
Сидела ты, дышала рядом ты.
(Всю негу, мудрость, грусть и прелесть мира
Являли мне нежнейшие черты.)

Ничто не дрогнуло в моем лице суровом,
Когда я понял: ты моя, моя.
Я слышал ласку голоса родного,
И подползло счастье, как змея.

О, как ужалило! На жизнь. Я встал неспешно,
Чтобы сказать товарищам моим,
Что я люблю тебя — любовью неутешной,
Что я тобой — по гроб, по смерть — любим.

-Друзья, товарищи!.. - Умолкли споры, хохот.
-Друзья, - сказал я, подбодрив чуть-чуть...
Но в тесной комнате вдруг протянулся грохот,
Сверкнул огонь — и, пораженный в грудь,

Проснулся сразу я... Еще дрожал от эвона,
Еще гремел будильник на столе.
А за окном моим — над облаком зеленым —
Вставало солнце в предрассветной мгле.
That -- was only a dream. Vain, oh, in vain were
All the sorrow, and pain, and courage and ardor.
Above my scattered dream -- arrogantly and impassively --
A blood-stained, indifferent sphere arose.

Thus our lives shall pass. Someone dreams this,
But all shall pass, when he wakes up.
Just as in the unsophisticated complaints of the poet:
Like snow, like smoke, like a footprint, like dust and sleep.
То — был лишь сон. Напрасны, о напрасны
Вся скорбь, и боль, и мужество, и жар.
Над сном развеянным — надменно и бесстрастно —
Вставал кровавый, равнодушный шаг.

Так наша жизнь пройдет. Кому-то снится это,
Но все пройдет, когда проснется он.
Совсем как в жалобах бесхитростных поэта:
Как снег, кад дым, как след, как пыль и сон.
XXI. Happiness

Those years have imperceptibly set in,
When joy is more obscure and harder to achieve.
The days of my freedom, of my wayward youth
Have disappeared in the distance.

I recall when the sky was studded with insane stars,
I recall when nights were shaped in primitive dreams,
I recall a dark-complexioned, sweet, youthful air,
A lime tree standing guard at the wicket gate.

A nocturnal peace that prophesized my happiness,
Filling at my heart with an ancient torment;
I recall all, that which during a Bessarabian night
Heralded God and you.

You came -- and happiness became a bit more meager,
You are with me, but I don't hear God,
You are mine -- and what maybe can be sadder!...
You are mine -- and my lot is a cruel one.

This sorrow is known to all who love.
This pain lives in the hearts of all living creatures.
You are mine -- and a happiness, more similar to fear,
Will not abandon my house.

A happiness that gnaws at man,
A happiness that burns man.
A happiness that shall not help the world,
Nor save us from it.
XXI. Счастье

Незаметно наступили годы,
Когда радость глуще и трудней.
Отшумели дни моей свободы,
Беззаконной юности моей.

Помню небо в сумасшедших звездах,
Помню ночи в первобытных снах,
Помню смуглый сладкий южный воздух,
У калитки - лилу на часах.

Мир ночной, что счастье мне пророчил,
Древней мукой сердце теребя;
Помню все, что бессарабской ночью
Предвещало Бога и тебя.

Ты пришла - и счастье чуть беднее,
Ты со мною, но не слышен Бод,
Ты моя - что может быть грустнее!..
Счастье, похожее на страх,

Счастье, что человека гложет,
Счастье, что человека жжет.
Счастье, что миру не поможет,
Но и нас от мира не спасет.

337
XXII. Letter

You shall never forget me,
And neither temptations, nor time, nor people,
Nor the graveside languor of candles,
Are imperious over the meeting of meetings.

In this world, where stones are not steady,
Where saints and angels lie
I promise you a timeless,
Inviolable and tender refuge —

In your heart, capable of unforgettable love,
In your body, where your last love dwells,
Blood-thirsty, shameless, and meek
And persistent, like your lips.

You will forget, what caused your grief,
With whom you welcomed spring in Russia,
The soot, stench and hawker stand at the train station
(Where my regiment set off to war)...

You will forget relatives and friends
And our beloved church-bells,
Even the street number of your happy home...
You will forget what you lived for,

You will give back all. Only a recollection of the miracle
Of our meetings — shall you save forever.
You will remember, how the lie of love
Illumined our meager weekdays.
XXII. Письмо

Ты меня никогда не забудешь,
И не властны над встречей из встреч
Ни соблазны, ни время, ни люди,
Ни томление надгробное свеч.

В этом мире, где камни непрочны,
Где святые и ангелы лгут,
Я тебе обещаю бессрочный,
Нерушимый и нежный приют —

В твоем сердце — любви незабвенной,
В твоем теле — последней любви,
Кровожадной, бесстыдной, смиренной
И упрямой, как губы твои.

Ты забудешь — над чем гревала,
С кем встречала в России весну,
Копоть, смрад и лотки у вокзала
(Где мой полк уходил на войну)...

Ты забудешь родных и знакомых
И любимые колокола,
Даже номер счастливого дома...
Ты забудешь, зачем ты жила,

Все отдаешь. Только память о чуде
Наших встреч — навсегда сберегешь.
Будешь помнить, как скудные будни
Озарила любовная ложь.
You will remember the dense realms,
Where you listened seized by ecstasy,
How the winds of destruction and emptiness
Whirled over a happiness without measure.
Будешь помнить дремучие сферы,
Где восторженно слушала ты,
Как кружились над счастьем без меры
Ветры гибели и пустоты.
XXIII. The Land

The sun is setting over that land,
Where you and I led our sacred lives.
You are nearby still, my old friend
But is this still you, my beloved friend, still you?

I no longer believe -- I do no longer feel
The fearful, familiar tenderness, --
My irreplaceable tenderness --
And the agitated and mournful caresses...

The sky is turning grey, the world is becoming empty
(The sadness of centuries hover over the world...)
And night is empty and my day is lonely,
My heart grows poorer and poorer.

The sun is setting... how pale you are.
Cry for a while for a happiness that is not forgotten.
Farewell, perished land,
Of my homeless soul, of my insatiable love...
XXIII. Страна

Захождит солнце над той страной,
Где мы с тобой так свято жили.
Еще ты рядом, друг родной,
Но ты ли это, подруга, ты ли?

Уж я не верю — не узнаю
Знакомой нежности, пугливой, —
Незаменимую мою —
И ласк тревожных, и ласк тосливых...

Сереет небо, пустеет мир
(Печаль веков над миром реет...),
И ночь пустыня, и день мой сир,
Беднеет сердце мое, беднеет.

Захождит солнце...Как ты бледна.
Поплачь о счастьи незабытом.
Прощай, погибшая страна
Души бездомной, любви несытой...
XXIV. Betrayal

By your guilty-merry eyes,
By your cunning-innocent smile,
By your lips - that aged instantaneously --
By your startled fingers, so long and beautiful,

That shivered just a little bit in my firm hand,
By your sharp, rapid heart beat,
By your instantaneous, mortally-blissful anguish
(When I kissed your tense hand)

I knew everything. I understood all, my friend.
I saw with my own eyes that I was deceived and betrayed.
And I left. And I entered the purifying circle
Of loneliness and sorrow, of freedom and victory.
XXIV. Измена

По твоим виновато-веселым глазам,
По улыбке твоей воровато-невинной,
По твоим — постаревшим мгновенно — губам,
По испуганным пальцам, прелестным и длинным,

Задрожавшим чуть-чуть в моей твердой руке,
По сердечному, острому, краткому стуку,
По мгновенной, смертельно-блаженной тоске
(Когда я целовал замиравшую руку)

Я узнал обо всем. Я все понял, мой друг.
Я воочию видел — обманут и предан.
И ушел. И вступил в очистительный круг
Одиночества, грусти, свободы, победы.

345
XXV. Mirage

Our happiness has split, it was ground to dust,
My languorous angel with a radiant head,
And the brightest voice in the world grows dark,
Your mournfully-sensual passionate voice.

Your voice is mournful -- in it, hopelessness is ripening,
It is passionate - tempered by the torment of the world.
Whether you weep or don't weep, this tenderness is dying.
Hide it -- don't, I hear your clandestine moan with my heart.

And I look at your hands grown weak.
(Nowhere will I ever see dearer ones...),
These hands are two testimonies to torment,
To despair, insult and shame.

I embrace your shoulders that have lost their impetuosity, their wings,
I press myself against the impassioned sorrow of your lips and hands.
Irreproachable, precious, beloved friend,
My oh so dear, my poor - my tender - my needed friend,

Our happiness has split, it was ground to dust,
It was scattered in the yellow mirage of the world...
And the purest voice in the world grows tainted,
Your mournfully-sensual and languid voice.
XXV. Мара

Раскололось наше счастье, размололось,
Томный ангел мой с лучистой головой.
И темнеет самый святый в мире голос,
Скорбно-чувственный горячий голос твой.

Скорбен голос твой — в нем зрет безнадежность,
Он горяч — он мукой мира накален.
Плакать — и плакать, она предсмертна, эта нежность.
Прячь — не прячь, я сердцем слышу тайный стон.

Вот смотрю на обесцветленные руки
(Драгоценное не встретить мне нигде...),
Эти руки — два свидетельства о муке,
Об отчаянии, обиде и стыде.

Обнимаю обескрыленные плечи,
Приникаю к страстной скорби губ и рук.
Друг любимый, драгоценный, безупречный,
Милый—милый, бедный — нежный — нужный друг,

Раскололось наше счастье, размололось,
Распылилось в желтой маре мировой...
И мутнеет самый чистый в мире голос,
Скорбно-чувственный и томный голос твой.
XXVI. Separation

This is all that is left to remember
Of a love proud, like a flag, —
Only an evil, idle compassion,
Courteous best wishes for health and "all the best."

And the bleak happiness of freedom
(All has perished, whether you regret it or don't.)
And a heavy contemptuous rest
From embraces, insomnia, lying.

We hardly should judge each other,
Only our hearts shall each conceal its own secret rancor:
They will never forget anything ever,
Nor ever forgive anything.

XXVII. Separation

Like ships in the sea, like waves in the ocean
(Where is the theme of meeting - there is the roar of parting),
Like trains in the night... (that clashed like swords --
Two long and weakening groans.)

Like ships in the sea... Oh, it's not like that at all.
It is both simpler, and more frightful: in the boundless world of plain dull days.
We parted, my dear and tender enemy,
Like people who have ceased loving each other.

---

21 Knut at this point has 3 poems with identical titles. Each is called "Separation".
XXVI. Разлука

Вот и всё, что на память осталось
От любви горделивой, как флаг,
Только злая ленивая жалость,
Пожеланья здоровья и благ.

Да суровое счастье свободы
(Все погибло, дрожи — не дрожи!),
Да тяжелый презрительный отдых
От объятий, бессонницы, лжи.

Мы друг другу, пожалуй, не судьи,
Только сердце свое затайт:
Ничего никогда не забудет,
Никогда ничего не простит.

XXVII. Разлука

Как в море кроабли, как в волны в океане
(Где в теме встречи — рокот расставанья),
Как поезда в ночи...(Скрестившись, как мечи —
Два долгих и слабеющих стенанья.)

Как в море корабли... О, нет, совсем не так.
И проще, и страшней: в безбрежном мире буден
Мы разошлись с тобой, родной и нежный враг,
Как— разлюбившие друг друга люди.

21 Knut at this point has 3 poems with identical titles. Each is called "Separation".
XXVIII. Separation

Again above a midnight soul\textsuperscript{22}
An ancient anguish flutters:
A lover's joy is precarious,
A lover's torment is strong.

Silence descends once more
On a farcical and plague-stricken world:
A lover's happiness is beyond measure,
A lover's grief is worldly wise.

Tranquillity and purity
Flourish again in the lines of my poetry:
A lover's happiness is wanton,
A lover's torment is sacred.

\textsuperscript{22} The poetic instrumental ending is used here.
XXVIII. Разлука

Опять над душою полночной
Старинная рееет тоска:
Любовная радость непрочна,
Любовная мука крепка.

На мир, балаганный и чумный,
Нисходит опять тишина:
Любовная радость безумна,
Любовная горечь умна.

И вновь расцветают построчно
Спокойствие и чистота:
Любовное счастье порочно,
Любовная мука свята.

---

22 The poetic instrumental ending is used here.
XXIX. Everything Is All Right

Hush... So what, that it turned out to be a lie
All you lived by - all that you shall die from!
You see, no one shall be able to help you,
For the word "help" is also a - lie.

Everything is all right. The street and the sky...
The sound of trams and cars is the same as always.
There is a sad smell of green vegetables and bread...
All is as it has always been: yet, nothing is like it was before, nothing is.

You forgot that our life is mortal,
You cry harboring an infinite hope.
But no one shall ever hear.

--My friend...
There is no friend, nor an answer.
Oh, if only I could also not be!

Beyond homes, in dusty shafts of light,
Through the trees of an urban summer,
A white ocean of non-existence
Emerges, barely moved by the wind.
XXIX. Все в порядке

Тише... Что ж, что оказалось ложью
Все, чем жил, — все, от чего умерешь!
Ведь никто тебе помощь не сможет,
Ибо слово помощь тоже ложь.

Все в порядке. Улица и небо...
Тот же звон трамваев и авто.
Грустно пахнет зеленью и хлебом...
Все, как было: все — не то, не то.

Ты забыл, что наша жизнь смертельна,
Ты кричишь в надежде беспределной.
Не услышит — никогда — никто.

—Друг мой...
Нет ни друга, ни ответа.
О, когда бы мог не быть и я!

За домами, в пыльные просветы,
Сквозь деревья городского лета,
Проступает, чуть катимы ветром,
Белый океан небытия.
XXX. Trip To San Remy

It was the third of April
Of the year nineteen hundred and thirty-two
(We'll omit the one thousand for convenience).

In the world it was cold and damp.
Rain fell. Umbrellas hastily blossomed
Beneath an incessant shower
With urban black mushrooms,
But in the woods: mushrooms are raincoats.

In the world it was cold and empty.
By day, indistinct sunlight streamed over it
With an ancient indifference, but at night
Urban lifeless stars
Froze apathetically in the sky.

Only a star of forgotten lanes,
A half-dead star of outlying districts,
And more stars of mountains and beaches,
And living stars of countrysides --
With all its trembling and brilliance
They quivered at the thought: of struggle and death,
Of love, of mystery, of fate.
And pointed beams, like wisdom or compassion
Were extended to us.
Поеzdka B Cён-Реми

1.
Это было третьего апреля
Девятьсот тридцать второго года
(Тысячу опустим для удобства).

В мире было холодно и сыро.
Шли дожди. Под непрестанным душем
Городскими черными грибами
Расцветали зонтики поспешно,
А в лесу: грибы—дождевики.

В мире было холодно и пusto.
Днем над ним текло слепое солнце
С древним равнодушием, а ночью
Безучастно леденели в небе
Городские неживые звезды.

Лишь звезда забытых переулков,
Полумертвая звезда окраин,
Да большие звезды гор и пляжей,
Да живые звезды деревень —
Всем своим дрожанием и блеском
Трепетали: о борьбе и смерти,
О любви, о тайне, о судьбе.
И протягивали к нам лучи,
Острые, как мудрость или жалость.
In the world it was cold and rumbling.
Lands and people were furious.
(At night it seemed to me an alarming sound --
The crunch of teeth... or crash of the final thrones?)
Governments were clearly unsteady,
Lands began to burn,
Pairs of non-existence soared over the earth
On the day, when -- using freedom
(It was the third of April) --
I gathered various types of fruit
From a shameless joyful woman street-trader
With greedy and generous eyes,
And, they got mixed up with a festive crowd
Of dull-toothed inhabitants of suburbs
And democratic Parisians,
We took a roaring, quick-moving dacha train,
Running boldly to San-Remy.
В мире было холодно и гулко.
Страны и народы.
(Ночью мнился мне тревожный звук —
Скрип зубов... иль треск последних тронов?)
Явственно шатались государства,
Страны загорались, над землею
Реэли пары небытия
В день, когда — используя свободу
(Это было третьего апреля) —
Я набрал разнообразных фруктов
У бесстыдной радостной торговки
С жадными и щедрыми глазами,
И, смешавшись с праздничной толпою
Сероузубых жителей предмстий
И демократичных парижан,
Сел в гремучий юркий дачный поезд,
Бойко побежавший в Сэн-Реми.
2.

The hour was early. In the coupé, next to me,
A pair is seated, firmly hugging one another
At the window a painting of suburbs was glimpsed fleetingly:
Shy verdure and fences,
Thickset low train stations,
Neglected people and homes,
That are diving to dust, -- and to the inevitable
Disgraced by the advertisement of a hovel,
Carrying to the world, news of Dubonné.

Rocking slightly just a tiny bit in time to the wheels,
That were tapping out something to motifs^23
And those of Solomon and those of the Book of Ecclesiastes,
I imperceptibly began to listen to the whisper
Of my neighbors.

Oh, dull and viscous words,
Oh, destitute lovers, as the unfestive language
Of their love was pitiful.
Oh, the poor, when they knew,
How others -- their precursors -- spoke of love:
Petrarch^24, or Dante^25,
Ovid^26, Pushkin, Tyutchev or Blok.
And I was shamed for their love:

---

23 This is clearly a play on the word "motif". Knut refers to both musical and biblical motifs. The rhythmic clack of the train wheels provides the musical motif, while the recall of Biblical figures, Solomon and his Book of Ecclesiastes, provides the Biblical motif.
24 Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374) - Italian poet and scholar.
25 Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Italian poet. His greatest work is the Diving Comedy.
26 Ovid - Roman poet (43 B.C.E. - 18 C.E.)
2. Был ранний час. В купе, со мною рядом, 
Сидела пара, обнимаясь крепко.
В окне мелькала живопись предметий:
Застенчивая зелень и заборы, 
Приземистые низкие вокзалы,
Заброшенные люди и дома,
Ныряющие в пыль, – и неизбежный 
Рекламой обеспечененный домишко, 
Несущий миру весть о Дюбонне.

Чуть—чуть покачиваясь в такт колесам, 
Выступившим что—то на мотивы 
И Соломона, и Экклезиаста, 
Я незаметно начал слушать шепот 
Моих соседей.

О, скучные и вязкие слова, 
О, нишие либовники, как жалок 
Был их любви непраздничный язык. 
О, бедные, когда б они узнали, 
Как говорили о любви — другие, 
Предтечи их: Петrarка или Данте, 
Овидий, Пушкин, Тютчев или Блок. 
И стыдно стало мне за их любовь:
To pine all day anywhere in the office,
Or to bend over some lady's blouse,
Or somehow otherwise sell
My day, my labour, my sweat, my fate
To one, who shall give you some money,
And after days - entwined by boredom
Of waiting until Sunday, until the day of freedom,
When you are my brother, a friend to the world and to the wind,
And meet with your welcome
And didn't know how to say anything,
And didn't know how to hear anything from a poor desire,
More wiser, more musical, more vivid
Than uninspired and mildewed words
Of today, a dampish day,
That soon, lo,
And, having been silent for awhile, and, as if waking up
From a long and cramped embrace,
Having sighed,
A strawberry appears to speak
Of a hat, shoes, a water-pipe...
Весь день томиться где-нибудь в конторе,
Или склоняться над какой-то блузкой,
Иль как-нибудь иначе продавать
Свой день, свой труд, свой пот, свою судьбу
Тому, кто даст тебе немного денег,
И после — оплетенной скукой — денег
Дождаться воскресенья, дня свободы,
Когда ты миру друг и ветру — брат,
И встретиться с желанно своей
И ничего ей не уметь сказать,
И ничего от бедной не услышать
Умнее, музыкальнее, живей
Бездушных и заплесневелых слов
О том, что день сегодня сырой,
Что скоро, вот, появится клубника,
И, помолчав, и, словно просыпаясь
От долгого и тесного объятия,
Вздохнув, дрожащим голосом сказать —
О шляпе, башмаках, водопроводе...
I changed seats with the one opposite, so as to peer into
My traveling companions' eyes... And lo, through their eyes,
Through their lips, their hands - I suddenly saw
With bewilderment and almost with fright:

Some sort of secret world was revealed to them,
A world that appears through words and things
Through inert, plain objects,
A beautiful mysterious world was open to them.

The railroad car flew and in the old coupé
I saw the dust, the unclean benches,
And crumpled newspaper (that is more offensive
Than a read newspaper!..) and of neighbors,
Still not old, but made flaccid by life.

I heard the knock and squeak of the window frame
Even the drumming of wheels. They even, sitting nearby,
Gazing at something, see the other,
They heard the other, and knew of the other,
And I was like a blind man, with sight
Who is sitting - before them such colors,
And stars such, like the gloom, and song,
And a girl, carrying a small basket,
But how dissimilar betwixt its vision,
That later, each one carries off to himself.

He said to her: You look pale today,
My dear hare, my dearest little one...
And the woman became intoxicated,
And her eyes felt insanity with an inflamed happiness.
3.
Я пересел напротив, чтоб вглядеться
В попутчиков... И вот, по их глазам,
По их губам, рукам — я вдруг увидел
С недоумением и почти с испугом:

Им был открыт какой-то тайный мир,
Что простирает сквозь слова и вещи,
Сквозь косые невзрачные предметы, —
Им был открыт прекрасный тайный мир.

Вагон летел, и в стареньком купе
Я видел пыль, нечистые скамейки,
И смятую газету (что противней
Прочитанной газеты!), и соседей,
Еще не старых, но помятых жизнью.

Я слышал стук и скрип оконной рамы
Да дробь колес. Они же, рядом сидя,
На то же глядя, видели иное,
Иное слышали и знали об ином,
И я подобен был слепцу, со зрячим
Сидящему — пред ними те же краски,
И звезды те же, те же — мрак, и песня,
И девушка, несущая корзинку,
Но как несхожи меж собой виденья,
Что — позже — каждый унесет к себе.

Он говорил ей: ты бледна сегодня,
Мой милый зайчик, крошка дорогая...
И женщина панели, и безумье
Мутило ей глаза горячим счастьем.
A meek and divine language
Is involved, a language of looks and silences.
From hands to hands, from their eyes to one's own eyes,
From heart to heart the living currents flow
Currents of that joy, which has not name,
Of that fascination, which has not measure,
Of that generosity, which has no boundary.

It is still the most mysterious world
Of unclear, musical measurements,
There's a Tsar's symphony of love,
In which words melt down upon themselves,
Turning black, burning to ash, dying,
Like a charred leaf in autumn,
Like a heart robbed of vitality by boredom,
Like a heart, that didn't wait for happiness.

The conductor shouted out something. The train stops.
I went along a dear little country road for a long time.
The whitish, somnolent overcast day continued,
But in the grey sky a peaceful happiness ripened.
Смиренный и божественный язык
Прикосновений, взглядов и молчаний.
От рук к рукам, от глаз — к родным глазам,
От сердца к сердцу шли живые токи.
Той радости, которой нет названия,
Той прелести, которой меры нет,
Той щедрости, которой нет предела.
Да, есть еще таинственнейший мир
Неясных музыкальных измерений,
Есть царская симфония любви,
В которой расплавляются слова,
Черная, истлевая, умирая,
Как осенью — обугленный листок,
Как обескровленное скучой сердце,
Как сердце, недождавшееся счастья.

Кондуктор что-то крикнул. Поезд стал.
Я долго шел проселочной дорогой.
Стоял белесый сонный хмурый день,
Но в сером небе зрело счастье мира.
CONCLUSION

My translation of Knut's five collections has left me convinced that Knut's essential theme is a "return" to the First Homeland or "Prarodina." From this theme follow both his Biblical imagery and his sensual motifs. As depraved as love is in modern society, in Knut's poetic oeuvre, so was it just as beautiful in the world of the "Song of Songs." My translations do not include the incomplete cycle "Прародина" ("First Homeland"). This may seem odd in view of the fact that I consider "Прародина" the essential theme. However, this would be one of the tasks for future Knut scholars: to examine the conditions of his return in order to give an adequate translation of this complex and incomplete collection.

What I have done in my translations is to present the poet's development up to the crucial point of his final return. The last phase of Knut's life, however much shorter, should be separately examined. Ideally, future Knut scholars, myself included, should journey to Israel and retrace the poet's paths there. In addition, scholars should find surviving family members, study the archives of the last years, and then proceed to an adequate translation. The materials should also yield the answer to a question that I did not attempt to answer in the dissertation, but one that is key for any future study of the poet: Did Knut feel that he indeed had found the land he had been seeking all his life with his
emigration to Israel? Or did he forever search for the land of Biblical yore that perhaps could only truly be found on the spiritual plane? This is a complex task that will occupy Knut scholars for some time to come.

For scholars interested in Knut's poetic oeuvre, another task that I think should be accomplished is a comparison of Knut with Blok, in particular, but also other Russian poets, such as Mayakovsky, Esenin and Pushkin. Throughout my translations, I have made some minor footnotes referring to each of these writers. However, since the focus of this dissertation was the presentation of the poet's themes and imagery in translation, I was unable to devote my attention to this intriguing task.

Yet another task that attracts me and that I think should be accomplished is a thorough examination of Knut's prose works, articles and his writings that dealt with World War II. Knut wrote a number of sketches about various writers and acquaintances, which would be a rich source for future scholarly research. I would like to have a clearer picture of what philosophy guided Knut's war activities, including his decision to take such an active role in forming the Jewish Resistance movement in Toulouse.

Was there indeed a tension between the activist and the poet that manifested itself in the attempt to emigrate to the United States of America? In this context, it would also be profitable for future scholars to examine the role of Ariadna Skriabina Knut. What was her impact on the poet's war activities and struggle for Jewish survival? Would Knut have become so engaged in the Jewish Resistance movement, indeed, would
he have chosen to become a leader in the Resistance, if he had not met and married Ariadna Skriabina?

These questions I leave in the hands of future Knut scholars. While I am limiting myself to the task of the present dissertation, I have become thoroughly convinced of the need to transcend these limits. With this thought in mind therefore, I plan to research and translate Knut's life and oeuvre for a considerable time to come.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Knut, David:

5. Nasushchnaja liubov'.
7. New Russian Studies, Vol. II

Knut, David:

1. La Bataille Du Ghetto De Varsovie

2. Contribution à l'histoire de La Résistance Juive

Archive Materials:

1. Chekver, Rakhil Samoilovna (1939, 1957)
   Source: Columbia University: Bakhmeteff Archives
Secondary Sources:


Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1972


29. Russo-Jewish Committee (ed.): *The Persecution of Jews in Russia.*


35. Wagner, Richard: *Tannhäuser.*


**Articles:**


**Biblical Reference Sources**
