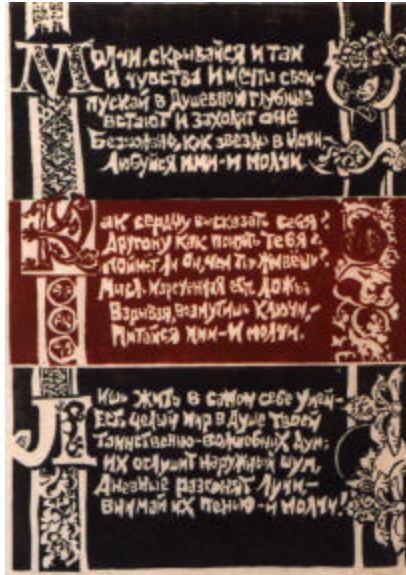


RUSSIAN POEMS

Translated by William Minor



SILENTIUM

Be silent and conceal yourself:
All passion and all dreams of flight.
In the soul's depth, let pass
--To rise and set as soundlessly
As stars--your feelings and your thoughts.
Admire them, and be still.

How can the heart express itself?
Who will understand?
Who can know what you live by
When thought, once expressed, is a lie
And all depths, stirred, disperse?
Drink of them, and be still.

It is best to live within yourself
Where many worlds reside
Of secret and mysterious thought; where
Your soul is not engulfed by noise
Or urged away by daylight.
Hed that singing, and be still.

Fyodor Tyutchev



The Last Toast

I drink to this ruined house,
And to my own malignant life.
The loneliness that was ours
And all the lies we told
I also pledge. I drink
To blinded eyes, to this
Unpardonable world
And to the God who wouldn't forgive.

Anna Akhmatova



To love some women is a heavy cross
But you are beautiful without blemish.
The secret of your subtle charm
Equates the secret of life itself.

With spring comes rustling and we know again
What stirs with novelty and truth.
From that source you began.
Your meaning's clear and like the air, so unconcerned.

Lightly you're aroused, and then to ripen!
To shake from out the heart the waste of words--
To live! No longer bound.
But this takes more than cunning, more than craft.

Boris Pasternak



**You understand: in distress I fall
Praying over the death of God.
For I have learned pain by heart,
Repeated on Tver's mournful earth.**

**A crane sits on a worn-down well;
Above him, boiling with foam, the clouds.
A gate creaks, and throughout this forlorn land:
The scent of grain and grief--**

**And these dull distances
Where even the voice of the wind is lost,
But not the censure on the faces
Of calm and sunburnt peasant wives.**

Anna Akhmatova