

SPRING IN THE FACTORY
N.I. Vaptsarov

She would have entered first
with the night shift
the Motor yet became
extremely angry
that without any permit
enter
might she:
-I am the boss
and I command : "No entry!"

However She did not obey
and came in
through window
in the ceiling,
shining clearly,
her own merry
independence
claiming,
and, being inside,
laughed at Motor
dearly.

The working men got strangely absent minded,
and suddenly a stirrer
started singing,
in concert with it sang
the men behind it,
excited
by the mood
that She was bringing.

"I want to fire Her!"
Announced the Motor,
obsessed
by growing fear

for his career.
"To fire Her!
O, no! "
Exclaimed a rotor,
"We will defend
by strike
her presence here!"

The Motor shut up,
and the zephyr brought
a flavour
of fresh flowers,
and of earth,
a melody
of youth on distant road,
directed
to a happy universe.

Those who had ever been
engaged in ploughing
were trembling
like young horses
in a row,
the rest,
upon the window lattice bowing,
enjoyed the sun
that melted
all the snow.

One mechanic cursed
without pardon,
a nice girl smiled
and started
merry song,
the factory at once
became a garden
just as by order
of a magic gong.

Then here

threateningly
came the porter
and asked:
"Who is intruder without license?"
But noticing that all is
here in order,
he whistled joyfully
and stopped
in silence.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan. K. Robev)

ROMANTICS
N.I. Vaptsarov

I want to create to-day a poem
in which
 to pulsate
 the verses of our new time,
may tremble in it
 the zeal of mankind to roam
that prompts
 the two poles of planet
 to chime.

Who needs to cry?
Why sigh the people,
regretting the long passed away romantics?
Romantics now are
 the flying motors
that change our life
 and our old semantics.

And disregarding
 their modern
 voice,
you try
 in vain
 at them to sneer,
they had
 already made
 their sacred choice
with winged forces
 and without fear.

I see the future fate
 of these devices,
dispersing
 freedom
 and a rain of grain,
immortal songs
 and drugs

against the crises,
invented by almighty
human brain.

I see
how they
fly over the meridians,
how shuttle
to and fro
the frigid zones,
and over fields
with colours
of obsidians
that long to ploughing
and to happy dawns.

It is the new romantics
that emerges
with gallant image
and triumphant word,
on progress
and on peaceful deeds
it urges,
encircling
nowadays
the whole world.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

DUEL
N.I. Vaptsarov

At you and me are clutched our hands,
our fight is cruel

and without mercy,
my heart in wounds now here stands,
groggy you are,

what further?

One of us has to be dead,
one of us shall lose his head,
and the defeated

shall be you.

You don't believe?

You are not scared?

But I computed every pass,
all forces for the fight prepared,
the cruel battle

I shall win

against your sin,

against my past.

Our duel is since long ago,
it started

since one hundred years,
it is non-compromised

and fierce,

despite the law...

Despite the law we again
are clutching steadily our hands
and I am trying to sustain
a pain
as though by iron bands.

The pit was stricken

by a blow,
and coal avalanche there buried

You know who was this misanthrope?
No doubt,
it was me.

Do you remember
how a child
once died on barricade in Paris?
One child on battlefield
there died,
attacking fearlessly,
and perished.
His blood
was flowing out
slowly,
becoming cool
as steel of sword,
but on his lips a smile was growing
with a naive
but sacred word,
and afterwards
the lips were stiffening
but his blue eyes
were proud and free,
and they were singing in the evening
"Liberté chérie..."
A boy is shot in chest
to death,
without motion lies there he.
Who was that brave child?
Do you guess?
No doubt, it was me!

Do you remember the device
that passed
with laugh
and optimism
the clouds where even biggest fowl
is not allowed
at any price,

a winged motor that with bowl
splits all ice-curtains
of the orbit,
and killed
by force
of petrol vapors
the evil past -
exact and morbid?
The motor
singing
so inviting
is product
of my mighty skill,
and in its song
as strong as lightning
pulsate
my heart and my good will.
The man, who made it,
concentrated
his glance on compass
with true faith,
he fought
and won against the tempest,
against the thunders
and the sea...
Do you remember his
brave face?
No doubt, it is me!

Yes, I am here,
there,
everywhere -
a Texas working employee,
a porter,
poet in despair...
It,s always me!
It,s always me!

How do you think?
Will you win,

you ghastly,
 nasty, bad, mean life?
With zeal we fight, to beasts akin,
 in sweat is soaked our strife.
But all your forces now expire,
 you weaken,
 losing
 normal breath,
and that is
 why you burst in fire
in mortal horror may be.
 Yes!

And then we shall substitute you
for new society-
 good and live,
with promise
 for a precious future
in life.
 And what a life!

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

are Ilinden songs singing,
in Ohrid -
the most sacred dreams there lie
and further
my look
in Aegean is sinking.

This I remember.
Pictures with blood
are minted
and printed
in my whole person.
O, my land!
O, my land!
You are wounded and cut,
suffering
in tears,
rebellions
and arson.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

LETTER
N.I.Vaptsarov

Do you remember
the Mediterranean
and all the hatches
full of creeping
dark,
and that remotest dream,
akin
to mania,
for Philippines
and Famagusta,s star?

Do you remember
any seaman,s soul
who does not want there
to exchange a glance
with South and, challenging his chance,
to feel the scent of tropic air?

Do you remember, yet,
how strangely
slow
our best hopes
died in ugly mental tortures
with our faith in truth and human law,
in the romantics -
picturesque and gorgeous?

Do you remember
how we
were caught
in trap
prepared by men
without mercy,
and how we were longing
to get out?
Regaining senses
we felt bad
and thirsty,
just as wild animals,
enclosed in cages.
Courageous
were our thoughts
and still going
because we were so young,
we were so young.

And afterwards
a sharp
and deepest hatred
obsessed our hearts
with zeal

and veneration,
as gangrene,
no, as leprosy,
it made it
and webbed its damned horror curtain
of emptiness and tragic burden,
and led us
to a non existing station.
It pierced the blood
insistently
and surely
but it was early, it was very early.

And high
in sky
sung still the wings of sea-gulls,
the sky again was shining
wide and long,
the space again
was sacred realm
of eagles,
on the horizon still
in perfect concert
the masts of ships became obscure and shady,
the sails again saluted every sunset
but we, we were completely blind already.

To me this is a past-not so important
but we
in poverty slept
on the ground,
and due to our mutual misfortune
I want
to tell you
how I,m fit and proud.

This is the reason
that stops my desire
to make
a hole in my skull

by a gunshot,
it now transforms
malice
and vicious fire
in battle
that starts thundering
with bloodshed.

It will return to us
the Philippines,
and also Famagusta, a precious star,
and joyfulness
that was so long eclipsed,
and the late love to tireless machines,
we being sure,
the ocean keeps it
there,
where the tropic shines-
bright and bizarre.

Now it is night. The voices of machine
are gently promising
good morrow.
O, how I long to heal
the social spleen,
and how chimeras
fill my heart with sorrow...
I am quite sure,
the dark
shall be dispersed,
the ice of yoke is going to be broken,
and a free sunshine
finally
shall burst,
confirming all good forecasts being spoken.

And let (as butterfly weak and modest)
it burn my wings
without hesitation,
I will not try to argue with protest,

and will endure
my funeral oration.

Yet, to be killed
when the world is getting
rid of miasma,
is not cause
of worry,
the millions of men
are resurrecting...
It is a glory,
yes, a real glory.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

A SONG FOR THE MAN
N.I. Vaptsarov

We speak with a lady
 in a shady
 tradition:
"The man
 under present condition".
The lady however
 is stubborn,
 you know,
she argues and burst into tears,
she floods me
 with muddiest torrents of woe
and showers
 with curses
 my ears.
"Be kind..."
 I retort.
 "Wait, allow me again..."
But she shots
 with adverse reflection:
"O, please,
 don,t insist, I hate him, the man,
he does not deserve your protection.
I read once how
 somebody
 brutally slew
by axe
 his own
 innocent brother,
next washed off the blood
 and further anew
went home absolution to gather."
I trembled,
 perplexed
 and obsessed with sadness,
but I am not strong in the theory,
and tried

with insistence,
without vain madness,
to calm her with that simple query.

The story had happened
in Village of Forthet.

The father
had hidden
some dough.

The son had discovered it,
had taken by force it,
and killed the old man with a blow.

But after a month
of incredible strain
police

had found his trace,
he was caught,
was trailed
in chains,
and finally sentenced to death.

Returning to prison
this subject
was guarded

as criminal
almost insane,
but there

surprisingly met
some good-hearted
young people,

becoming
a man.

His pedigree,
frankly said,
to me is unknown,

I don,t know
if he is
a coward,

but there,
imprisoned and sentenced,
his own

ideal
in a song
he discovered.
And later he talked:
" How I was embarrassed!
The bread was
too far
from sufficient,
and after so long
being as animal
harassed,
the virtues were hardly efficient.

And you have to wait
as a bull
to be slaughtered,
your eyes full of horror
and bloody...

No doubt, the devil
of this world
is the author
but, surely,
it otherwise
should be."

He started then
singing his song
without fear,
sung slowly, quietly, calmly,
a life as a dream
before him
did appear,
and he got asleep well,
smiling.

Talk out of season
is heard in the prison;
steps of some people
who run;
door is wide open
as though by no reason;
officers;

guard
with a gun.
Somebody told him
severely
and sadly:
" Stand up!
It,s already time!"
Others observed him
tensely
and badly,
ready to further the crime.
He unmistakably saw that,
no doubt,
life was
for him
at an end,
got up enraged
as wild beast
just caught,
looking in vain for a friend.
But little
by little
the lethal
convulsions
receded.
The debt he must pay.
Too late is already
for any indulgence.
"Shall we
now be going?
O.K."
He left.
And they followed
closely
thereafter
but trembled
as having a cold.
A soldier, embarrassed, said: "Let it be faster,
the finish.
You, brother,

stay bold!"

A talk
out of reason
is heard out of season,
all over is hidden in dark.
They came downstairs
to the yard
of the prison
and gathered
in form
of an arc.
The man looked thirstily
towards Aurora
and her
heavenly
stellar
estate,
and thought of his
owned,
renowned,
ferociuos,
non-cautious bad fate.

"My life,
it is over.
I face execution
but world is still going ahead,
the future
will come
as a new institution,
the spring of the man is not dead."
He started
the song
of the man,s resurrection
(his eyes radiating and gay),
he smiled,
yes, he smiled
in the mood,
with affection,
as though
to welcome the day.

How do you think?
 May be here somewhere
 is hidden
hysterical complex
 of guilt?
You sought
 and fought
 the man to be chidden
but by tools
 improperly built.
The man was continuing
 with his song,
 enlightened
and carefree,
 correct,
 word by word,
the others
 were looking at him
 very frightened,
they themselves
 were seeking
 support.
And even the walls
 of the prison
 were trembling
and darkness
 took refuge
 to West,
the stars in the sky,
 the diamonds resembling,
saluted him:
 "You are the best!"
The rest
 is most trivial.
 The rope.
 The hangman.
The signal.
 And after - the death.
But there,
 in the lips

through an awkward
entanglement,
his song
still was trying
to press.
And here is starting
the end of the story.
You, reader,
what do you think? -
The poor lady
showed
a great deal of worry
in fainting
with anger
to sink:
"Preposterous!
Awful!
Today you are hinting
that you have been there,
I guess."
No horror at all.
The man had been singing...
And this is
beautiful!
No less!

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev-1998)

SPRING
N.I. Vaptsarov

My dear spring, my very dear best season,
still unknown, and still less than feasible,
how I long to make you ever visible,
but the bloody time rejects my reason
almost suddenly as it had risen.

My dear spring, my very white dear season,
I am sure you will come as typhoons -
stormy, menacing, inviting, firing,
giving back our great hopes and admiring
those who heal the poor and their wounds.

Beautiful shall be the singing birds,
merrily they shall fly to the clouds,
people shall be joyful, good and proud
and shall love each other full of mirth.

My dear spring, my very white dear season,
let me see how you install your reason,
how successfully you launch your raids,
let me see your dark red rising sun,
and let me die on your barricades.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

RECOLLECTON
N.I. Vaptsarov

I had a good friend,
a very good friend
but he coughed too badly.
He cheaply was rent
to fulfil a goal-
loading with coal
a furnace, to earn his bread.

The eyes I remember
of this fireman.
How avidly got
 these sincere eyes of him
the slightest beam
that sometimes was entering
through moisture and dirt,
 each season,
our prison.

How faster and faster
a thirst did appear
in spring time
when most sublime,
fine whisper of leaves
and songs of the bird ,
that nearby lives,
are heard.

I feel how these eyes are praying,
how suffer they as though saying
to birds that there sing:
"Only till the spring,
o, till the next spring..."

The spring came most precious
with sun
and fun,
with flavours of rose,

mimosa and primrose
but indoors was dark,
and how was oppressive
the daily prose...

And so our poor life
was worsened
strongly.

The power of the motor dropped.
It started working wrongly
and stopped.
I don,t know why.
May be because
the other guy was dying
but may be this is not the cause,
may be the motor waited well
a strong hand to give the next coal dose
to firing hell.

Yes, may be... I am not sure why...
I guess the highly speeding motor
with pink ring of his rotor
asked: "Where is the other guy?"

The other guy died.
Again spring time is outside,
the birds for a free flight
again are ready,
yet, he can not see them
already.

He was such a good friend!
A very good friend!
But he coughed too badly.
He cheaply was rent
to fulfil a goal-
loading with coal
a furnace,
to earn his bread.

CINEMA
N.I. Vaptsarov

The crowd outside was coarse
but in a pretty panorama.
On the big wall a blue beam wrote
"A human drama".
Outside was noise, of coarse,
the coin with the Krum,s horse
was sweating with calm
in my palm.

And suddenly the lights went off.
Within the screen
the lion of Metro produced lazily a yawn,
and in a trice - a road,
soon after - woods,
and in the rear - blue sky
over a dark green lawn.

And on the road,
just closely to a turn,
collide two fashionable limousines,
and here we are due to learn
the names of our hero and our heroine.

After the accident
the gentleman
is taking the young lady in his arms,
she trembles entire,
as though in fire...
What a girl, my brother!
She is rather
similar to a stud in farm for horse-breeding.

Of coarse, nearby sing nightingales,
above the couple reigns a deep attraction,
and very temptingly beyond the rails
the dark green grass prompts them to action.

One reddish glowing John
gives Sara kiss with passion,
a mucus creeps
on his lips...
Down with that nasty fashion!
Where is our fate? Is that the real beauty?
Where am I? Do tell me!
The death does our life invade
and ask us for its bloody booty.

How could we love and talk like you
with miens by lies completely smitten?
Our breasts are full of burning smoke,
and our lungs - by ulcers eaten.
O, do we meet our sweethearts so -
when driving giant limousines?-
Our love is not allowed to grow
unless amid the roar of machines.

And after - grief, and grey bad life,
a fight for bread,
a dream for freedom,
and in the evenings - narrow bed,
and deadly sleep with deadly rhythm.

Yes, that is it !
That is the tragedy!
The rest is pageantry.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

AFTER THE EXECUTION

N.I. Vaptsarov

To my wife.

Sometimes I'll visit you when you are sleeping
as unexpected and forgotten guest,
do not allow my sorrow to deepen
and close the door without fastening.

I'll enter calmly, full of vague desire,
without touching any object here,
and, being satiated to admire,
I will embrace you and shall disappear.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

THE BATTLE IS CRUEL...

N.I. Vaptsarov

The battle, where I had been killed, is cruel,
the battle, as somebody says, is epic,
another shall continue the duel,
no one of us is worth apologetics.

A fire squad, and after comes the worm,
it is so clear, nothing is to bother,
but, my dear people, in the bloody storm
we shall unite for we did love each other.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)

LETTER
N.I.Vaptsarov
To Signora Franceska Labore Juesca.

Mother, Fernandes is dead,
Fernandes is no more here,
Fernandes
is shot to death-
victim of ferocious deed,
Fernandes is buried near
city suburbs of Madrid.

He was handsome and so good,
why they murdered my dear husband?
Is his death their bloody food?
Who the bloody fighting must ban?

Mother, you are the only soul,
to whom grief I am confessing,
death at war, you know, is tall,
tears are so hard to lessen.

Also in the others, eyes
you can't find a consolation,
tears, tears are the price
of each war and its creation.

May be brother, may be son,
may be lover dear is fallen,
may be by a blind canon
blossomed youth is being stolen.

May be somewhere, just as me,
waits for man another woman,
deep in earth is lying he
but with features scarcely human.

Mother, don't be cross at him,
he had fought for something dear,
Fernandes was right, I deem,
even may be wrong we are.

Only he was able to guess
the eternal truth of bravery:
better is to meet the death
than to live a life in slavery.

Yes, indeed, we had some bread,
for us both it was sufficient,
but how children could be fed?
Mother, we are not magicians.

There is still another point
that had always arisen -
people go, and fight, and join...
Is the bread the only reason?

To-day sunk into the grave
hundred dead that had been murdered
by a sharp machine-gun wave.
I saw them but couldn't talk further.

How all that was pretty strange,
how was charming their duty,
them I saw in god-like range,
radiating moral beauty.

For an instant I see them
through the planks of the black coffins,
groans from the inside stem
and the echo can't them soften.

They are joined in their death,
in one person they are melted,
and on their faces rest
flames of death and they had felt it.

Suddenly I understood -
any way, he had to be there,
he had perished and I would
never see him smiling either.

Mother, Fernandes is dead,
Fernandes is no more, mother,
Fernandes is dead, instead
happiness and joy to gather.

Do not tell the old man, please,
by such grief he might be shattered,
shed some tears alone in peace,
keep in secret all the matter.

If the old man finds some clue,
if he got suspicious may be,
tell him that it is not true
and that we expect the baby.

Tell him kindly: "Dolores
learns by heart some children's stories
and both, she and Fernandes,
ask you: grandson or granddaughter?"

Let us end all these sad words,
mother dear, my grief is growing,
pain is getting worse and worse...
Truly: D. Maria Goya.

(Translated from Bulgarian by Stefan K. Robev)