

THE HAWTHORN POETS 9

*AUSTRALIA'S  
UKRAINIAN POETS*



R. H. MORRISON

*By the same author*

LYRICS FROM PUSHKIN

LYRIC IMAGES

A BOOK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIAN VERSE

OPUS 4

AUSTRALIA'S RUSSIAN POETS

SOME POEMS OF VERLAINE

*AUSTRALIA'S  
UKRAINIAN POETS*

Translated by

R. H. MORRISON

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**TO**

**HRYHORY KOSTIUK**

**FRIEND OF UKRAINIAN POETS**



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## INTRODUCTION

This is not the place for a survey of the history of the Ukraine, that rich and beautiful 'border land' contended for over the centuries by various neighbouring and other invaders, and at times controlled partly or wholly by Russians, Lithuanians, Poles, Germans, Austro-Hungarians, or Asiatics. Nor is it necessary here to go into the racial divisions and movements of the Ukrainian, or Little Russian, peoples: Ruthenians, Moldavians, Jews, and so on. Interesting though their long history and their ethnography are, we are more immediately concerned with the results of the twentieth-century wars and subjugation which, in the course of scattering large numbers of Ukrainians over the globe, led some thirteen thousand of them to settle in Australia.

The Ukrainians are descendants of a branch of the East Slav race. They have their own centuries-old language and dialects, evolved, like Great Russian, from Old Russian. They have their own traditions, literature, music, and musical instruments, including the multi-stringed *bandura*, which they brought with them to Australia. They look back to a few brief years of republican government which followed the upheavals of 1917, seeing them as a short interval between a long period of Imperial Russian domination and the present communist rule with its oppression and Russification of cherished Ukrainian customs and distinctiveness. It is hardly surprising that their intense pride in their own land and people should be so energetically proclaimed as it is among the Ukrainians in exile, in Australia as elsewhere. In our country this finds outlet in the Ukrainian-language weekly and fortnightly newspapers, in literary and other magazines and anthologies, at public functions of all kinds, including assemblies of the two churches, Orthodox and Catholic. It is not surprising either that Ukrainians living in a democracy should use their freedom of speech to protest in the streets against what they see only as the enslavement of their nation of more than forty million people by the communists. The

observer of their denunciations of the Soviet régime comes to realize that the fierce opposition to the tyranny which rules their homeland extends in some quarters, to a greater or lesser degree, to all things Russian — even at times, and paradoxically, to the equally anticommunist contemporary Russian émigrés who make up another strand of the ethnic fabric being woven by Australia's post-war immigration.

Again and again the nostalgia of exile breaks out in the poetry of emigrants. The Ukrainians evoke the landscapes of their beloved Carpathians and steppes; their lost cherry orchards and white cottages; their mighty Dnieper and the ancient, legendary city of Kiev; their own kind of autumn and winter and their own spring and summer. Such subjects will be found among the poems translated in the following pages. But nostalgia is not enough, and there are other avenues of approach. One counter to past misfortunes is satire. Another is seen in the poets' reflection of the new chapter of history which begins with the settlement of these thousands of Ukrainians in our continent. This shows in the poems dealing with Australian subjects, where for a time homesickness is set aside and the poet's imagination responds to the stimulus of a new and vastly different country, just as has been seen in the poetry of other national minorities.\* An attempt has been made here to choose a range of texts having some general interest, and to exclude the more specially patriotic, historical, and religious poems, interesting though they too are.

As one might expect, some of the poems chosen have conventional subject-matter and treatment. On the other hand the volume opens with a selection from the work of a poet who, though belonging to the older generation, shows a perennial interest in technical experimentation. Miss Lydia Daleka's developments in alliteration, consonance, multisyllabic rhyming, and similar fields are highly interesting, but unfortunately they present special difficulties to the translator and justice could not be done to them here.

Some of the eight men and six women writers represented in this collection have established international reputations in the widespread community of Ukrainians abroad. From one country

\* Cf. *Australia's Russian Poets*, translated by R. H. Morrison (Melbourne, The Hawthorn Press, 1971).

to another these poets contribute to literary publications in their own language, and in a number of instances their work has been translated into other tongues. It is natural that greater prominence should be given here to the poems of the better-known authors. At the same time it seemed proper to include examples of work by others who may have written less, or whose original versions were less accessible, or whose poetry did not seem to lend itself so well to translation. A number of the younger poets among Australia's Ukrainians are represented also, in the hope that the anthology will present the Australian reader for the first time with a reasonably well-balanced cross-section of the creative writing of this national minority. By way of evaluating it we might ask ourselves how the standard of imagination and creative technique achieved would compare with that of a numerically analogous group of Australians in general. Would the average run of Australian cities with similar populations be able to do any better, or as well — for example, Lithgow or Werribee? Before attempting to answer that, one would need of course to go to the poems in their original Ukrainian and compare those, not the translations offered here, in which the poets' freshness of imagery and the melody of their own language are seen and heard — and too often inevitably missed — through an intermediary. In this connection, however, attention is drawn to the first two poems in the group by Miss Zoja Kohut; these are not translations, but examples of her own effective writing in English.

Here then is a selection drawn from a much larger body of poetry, offered in a good-neighbour spirit in these versions by a fellow poet. It results in part from a conviction that to the native citizen of a host country 'integration' has two aspects. It is not just a matter of the newcomers' finding a place for themselves; just as important is our finding room in our own minds for the richness of cultural heritage which people from other countries have brought with them to Australia. What they have to offer is not something pressed on us; we even have to take some pains to seek it out. In doing so we are made more and more aware of the wealth of enlightenment and enjoyment which such literary exploration can yield.

Acknowledgment is made to the poets themselves, who cooperated by making their published and unpublished work

available; to Mrs Helena Chorny (Lydia Daleka) for providing texts not readily available elsewhere, and for other valued assistance and information; and to the Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra, for supplying statistical matter.

Adelaide  
South Australia

R. H. MORRISON

LYDIA DALEKA

*Summer Day in Adelaide*

Wind has shredded the clouds  
and in tiniest flocks they've been scattered.  
Day is lifting itself  
from a shimmer of haze.

Tiring heat will press down  
and a hard day of work we'll be having —  
not a shadow of rest  
will lie stretched out today.

After many long hours  
you will finish your work — and the current  
of a joyful, fresh breeze  
will be starting to play.

And the sun will be found  
neither angry nor cruel, as it once seemed:  
you've become a strong tree  
deep in earth once again.

LYDIA DALEKA

*On the Sea-shore*

Slowly the wind blows,  
turning, examining  
fanning fronds.

    In that I seem to see  
    (often already read!)  
    "The Sea and The Shell".\*

Crouching dwarf cactuses,  
delving for drops,  
feel with fingers  
in greasy sand.

    Redness of red wine  
    spilt there lingers.

Stones that are old and wrinkled with wisdom  
don't move from their places.  
Are there hiding in dismal holes  
moss-covered mussels?

    Pearls will grow  
    as tears to embellish  
    some bosom of unwise sweetheart.

The palm of a flowing wave's hand is drifting,  
green and warm,  
and with care it lifts,  
lifts and draws out  
and lays on shore  
a beautiful sacrifice:

\* The wind's action is likened to the turning of the pages of the book *More i mushlya* (literally *The Sea and The Mussel*), an anthology of European poetry translated into Ukrainian by M. Orest (Munich, 1959). The title melodiously symbolizes translations as echoes heard in a sea-shell.  
—*Translator's note.*

rolling lace  
of seaweed flame  
turning roseate in a living glow.

In the rolling lace  
is treasured the happiness  
of creative longing –  
through marvellous myths  
in rose reality  
to know the sea's mysterious core.

The wind its ciphers  
of fanning fronds  
is slowly blowing  
on vellum clay.

LYDIA DALEKA

*From the cycle*  
*In the Everyday Circle*

Don't move, don't let the minutes be removed.  
Allow the evening's twilight to ferment.

Don't sway the surface of the herbs  
with echo of gentle melodies:  
splinters of purple sounds are swarming all around.  
The moon over the horizon is dropping them.  
    In time they'll grow calm,  
    when it rises to the bright summit.

Be silent. Be silent still.  
Night's still settling itself in the tree-tops' thicket.

Wait: only the starry multitudes' prelude  
    will betray no conspiracy.

LYDIA DALEKA

*The First Snow*

Do you remember still how the first snow  
into blue day its downy white advances?  
You stand by windows, moveless, rapt, and gaze as though  
the magic movement held you in its trances.

And suddenly you break free and you're going  
outside to let the snow melt on your hair,  
believing joyfully you now behold life growing  
purer than ever, clearer and more fair!

Four years I've lived in warm strange places, and  
quite happily . . . no bitter exclamation . . .  
but steppes are in my dreams, steppes of my native land,  
and first snow's cleansing and rejuvenation.

LYDIA DALEKA

*'Look how the moon has moved'*

Look how the moon has moved – a censer made of gold –  
and, scarcely visible in dark skies, smoke's extended.  
In silence let that word, that miracle, be told.  
One needs no other theme: in this all's comprehended.

Somewhere among the stars my earthly songs dream yet,  
but secrets of the heights here show themselves so lightly.  
And mutual loneliness by lucent day is met  
from nearness far removed, in concord shining brightly.

LYDIA DALEKA

*'The last chrysanthemums are calling'*

The last chrysanthemums are calling  
with remnants of the summer still,  
already their dark vestments falling  
on stone and wall and metal grille.

Out of the wood, mute dark rolls faster.  
Pity, in anger or despair,  
of netted evil theme is master —  
and ardour's flight dies in the air.

LYDIA DALEKA

*The Seagull*

Each new day, in its paper-wisp whiteness  
the gull wheels with my garden below,  
and to greet my guest's feathery lightness,  
with a smile . . . and remembrance . . . I go.

I recall from the past many a meeting,  
shores of homeland and ports far from here . . .  
Days have passed on their way . . . coursing . . . fleeting . . .  
and I hold all their light and shade dear.

Let your wings, little bird, each day bring you  
circling over in steep, soaring flight.  
These bread scraps are the gift I will fling you,  
and your gift – my heart's drop of delight.

LYDIA DALEKA

*On the Banks of the Torrens*

Slantwise the sunlight caresses  
waves its beams fancy they see.  
Willows have tangled their tresses:  
moveless, they cannot break free.

Here the wind, only just blowing,  
strokes a spiked ear on a stalk.  
There a swan's coming and going,  
guiding its brood with soft talk.

Barefoot on laceworks of greenness  
snails trample where they pass through.  
I dream, rejoice, watch with keenness,  
under the life-giving dew.

Adelaide  
1.9.1950

WOLODYMYR BILAJIW

*'Words on the paper'*

Words on the paper – thoughts' uncertain shadow falls.  
Eyelids with salt of weariness attacking . . .  
I gaze upon the hospital-like white walls  
And in my temples feel the hot blood racking.

Beyond closed panes the street's conveyor-line  
Grates on black-mirror windows, grinding, knocking.  
And I know well that somewhere lips made moist with wine  
With ardour of an eager kiss are locking,

Thirsty, but soon to parch and suddenly grow numb . . .  
In passions of the desert we go stumbling,  
To blest oases still a long way to come  
From where dunes of unmarried bed are crumbling.

And still my day to evening does not fade,  
Though moments' petals unrepeatably are dying,  
Still, like tired huntsmen, recollections mirage-made  
A ceaseless horn evokes with its enchanted crying.

WOLODYMYR BILAJIW.

*'In streams the snowflakes swim'*

In streams the snowflakes swim, compacted and grey-blue,  
And butterflies of blossom ring the cherry trees.'  
Tell me in what prophetic book, by whose  
Hand, pages will again be opened so that the

All-healing words' corruptless steadiness  
Shall in deep, filling draughts by feeling's hand be ladled.  
In hour ordained will you that grace make manifest?  
I pray, and I believe; I hope, and silent wait.

WOLODYMYR BILAJIW

*The Chestnut Trees*

Night shuts gold gates beyond blue mountains, and  
Under the window in the garden stand  
Chestnuts assembled one by one,  
Meeting in mourning for the sun  
As elders mourn for years of youth gone by.  
On someone's footsteps, while they gently sigh,  
A white flower falls, as though remembering one held dear.  
The chestnuts stand, praying to God thus:  
'Grant to us, Lord, we beg, resplendent days and clear,  
The bounty of your sun's gold give to us,  
And carefree dreams when bitter winter's here'.

1947

IRYNA NARIZNA

*Letter from Australia*

Winter: the apricots are blooming,  
the eucalypts are all in flower.  
And in the bush, where cliffs are looming,  
you see the wattle's golden shower:

its delicate, transparent laces,  
its tender dreams of spring-tide day,  
with beaded strings of sun it graces,  
though spring itself's still far away.

An ocean this blue sky, and under —  
the swift winds from the ocean blow.  
And here there flowers and flowers that wonder:  
the flame-tree in its fiery glow.

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'So soon I have forgotten'*

So soon I have forgotten blizzards, frosts, and snow  
And, trembling in cold depths, each little star on star.  
Here changeless eucalypts with sloping shoulders grow,  
Standing between the light and the sky-blue afar.

Past flies the wind with its now dry, now humid, air —  
Let the wall calendar show winter, if it will!  
As though in spring, without a sorrow or a care,  
The unspent roses blaze beneath the window still.

Inside the room, where books in ranks like soldiers stand,  
One smells green leaves, and here dropped petals lie about.  
These help me as I make my lines of verses and,  
By adding finished lines, fill their complete ranks out.

Only in time of night, when on the window pane  
As with dry palms the wind blow after blow lets fall,  
It suddenly seems that roads and homesteads once again  
Already lie beneath snow's long-forgotten pall.

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'Let it be so'*

Let it be so: in chance talk, or at work —  
People you come across in a day's meetings.  
In some the cold of winter seems to lurk,  
Others have sun and spring's breeze in their greetings.

Let it be so: past fly the uncurbed days,  
And though the sun is there, you do not see it;  
From windows, only night's dusk meets your gaze:  
The house is called your home, but may not be it. . . .

Let it be so: a bird's your haste appears —  
You stumble once, twice, thrice in agitation:  
You traverse, but do not pass through, the years,  
Your heart's all heat, your brow's all perspiration.

This holds no dread — far worse is loneliness  
When, like one lost, behind deaf doors you find it:  
Hearing the creep of each year's onward press,  
You go not with it, but you creep behind it. . . .

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'The wide and peaceful valleys'*

The wide and peaceful valleys call one from the peaks;  
In peaceful valleys, green hills call one from above.  
But suddenly a voice flies to one's heart and speaks:  
'Give your love not to them, do not give them your love! . . .

'With yours, the world has no green mountains to compare,  
There too warm valleys, streams, and forests you could find,  
The former days of your misfortunes were spent there,  
There relatives and friends of yours were left behind. . . .'

And then in haze and dust these mountains grow unclear,  
Behind the clouds a sun turned pallid slips from view:  
One moment everything seemed alien but still dear,  
Now suddenly it becomes alien and lifeless too! . . .

I thank you, valleys, streams, and fields: with you, no thing  
In all this strife can me to that old fear condemn –  
Into the faithless hour I hear you whispering:  
'Do not give them your love, give your love not to them. . . .'

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'No lofty ceilings'*

No lofty ceilings shall I boast of in my home,  
Nor carpets like a spacious meadow proudly show,  
For here the moving heart among the rocks must roam,  
For here the moving heart by tortuous ways must go. . . .

No, never shall this house a gilded cage be made;  
Into the world hence goes my heart, to wander there,  
And lying spread out on my forehead shall be laid  
Like furrow each new observation, thought, and care.

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'In the flowers of these gardens'*

In the flowers of these gardens I still to this day  
can't see spring.  
In September, where's spring to be found in the  
resonant thunder?  
That storks flew to my land from afar was an everyday  
thing,  
That they settled again on our warm native homes was  
no wonder.

I was used to the cuckoo that called in a garden of  
green  
With our years yet unlived – be they short! – in its  
song of foretelling.  
No, not here is that spring to be found! Here my heart  
has not been  
Laid at ease with the warmth of the sun-heated stones  
for its dwelling.

No, not here does it lie . . . Here one satisfies  
thirst, here one eats,  
But a wind blown from thawing grey snow is the food  
my soul's needing . . .  
The spring thunder beats over the houses, with  
lightning it beats,  
As though out of a book in a language unknown it were  
reading.

1968

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'Painful to love white winters'*

Painful to love white winters, woods, and streams  
From exile, when the heart that loves is aching;  
To wait for something, seeking in your dreams  
What course the river of your life is taking.

Always your heart awaits, awaits, awaits  
Something that's yet to come, something past knowing . . .  
Or something that a fierce storm agitates,  
Or else some branching tree, blossoming, growing!

Or tidings in the sonorous thunder's roar —  
All this is hard: not living, and not dying. . . .  
But sorrow goes, the arm grows strong once more,  
Again one's heart's assured, self-willed, defying!

Yes, sorrow goes, as silent as hushed strings:  
Alive and free, I live, as must all creatures.  
To live, think, love — is this what exile brings,  
Is this the lesson that a strange land teaches?

1964

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'Of bread you have enough'*

Of bread you have enough, and even more;  
You are well dressed, from head to polished feet. . . .  
No, that's not all — a warm heart will implore  
Still something that will make its life complete.

Still what? — That breezes' murmurs should be heard  
Among the flowering apple trees in spring,  
That by the opened window a small bird  
So joyfully its morning song should sing.

That with each day a new friend one should find,  
And that the old should have new lives to start,  
And that my sadness and my joy combined  
Should wish to live as sisters in my heart.

That an unopened book should yet be found  
With depths in its white pages to explore,  
And that the days like hooves should all resound,  
Days of life, thoughts and labour evermore.

1965

WASYL ONUFRIENKO

*'Time is a chain'*

Time is a chain, and every link a day:  
Round, each like each in their monotony.  
As with a pilgrim's feet, in thought I stray  
To some far shrine where no-one waits for me.

That soon far joy will toll, I do not know;  
Nor have I means of knowing from which side  
To that unique and sonorous bell I'll go,  
Hurrying on, yet with a chastened stride.

I do not fear that I'll arrive too late:  
There's happiness for all for long years yet,  
And holy days and dark toil there will wait,  
Both calm reposefulness and salty sweat.

Only to come, and near the gate to dwell,  
To lay one's few belongings on the grass,  
With face made new, new heart and thoughts as well,  
Where the tired soul's new warmth shall come to pass.

1961



EUGENE ZOZE

*Above the Waterfall*

The waterfall bathes  
    the black rock of the mute cliff . . .  
with a roaring all round, and sprays of foam.  
Like fire-flies on the wing,  
against the current, solitary small fishes.  
Birds with covetous eyeing  
circle above the whirlpool.  
    And like a little yellowed leaf,  
on the pool's surface is a sunbeam.  
The reeds' grey tops:  
    a silken pouring . . .  
    and a shadow, from the high sun —  
    the mollusc's jewel-case.

KONSTANTYN HIMMELREICH

*The Roadway*

A pre-dawn covering of haze  
across the mountain plain extends.  
Uphill is stretched one of two ways,  
the other to the vale descends.  
In one direction travel those  
who grasp the sword with all their might.  
And where the other roadway goes,  
trail those who through despair and fright,  
choosing to make their way abroad,  
into the valley's depths depart. . . .  
God grant that they should learn to hoard  
some drop of feeling in their heart!

1967

KONSTANTYN HIMMELREICH

*Dew*

Chortorohy's\* somewhere far,  
There, with plait on arm, are you.  
Under water, rapids are,  
on the beach's sand, dew, dew.  
There shows stormy grasses' green,  
there are flowers, flowers of the field.  
Somewhere sparkling dew is seen,  
dew on scythes, my memory's yield.

1967

\* The name (literally 'Devil's Horns') of a place not far from Kiev. — *Translator's note.*

KONSTANTYN HIMMELREICH

*The Hermit*

In that place, where the trams run not,  
where night's metallic clangs don't sound,  
his civilized soul a quiet spot  
far from all anguished hurt has found.  
There ageless ocean whispers low,  
and there is beauty's evergreen hue.  
There almonds and bananas grow,  
and on the palm trees sleeps the dew.

1972

## ZOJA KOHUT

### *Man*

Do not ask  
Why you were born,  
What's your cross —  
Better do not tell.  
Smallest part  
Of unknown heaven,  
Smallest part  
Of unknown hell . . .

Don't try hard  
To convince the others  
That your life  
Is your life alone.  
Smallest part  
Of all that is present,  
Smallest part  
Of all that is gone . . .

Don't complain  
That all things will perish,  
That there's no aim  
In the well-trod road.  
Smallest part  
Of imprudent beings.  
Smallest part  
Of eternal God! . . .

ZOJA KOHUT

*And Quiet Flows the Don . . .*

And quiet flows the Don . . .  
Not only the Don,  
Whole nations!  
Whole countries,  
Which you call,  
In ignorance,  
Just 'Russia' –  
They quietly exist.  
In fear, in hope,  
In hopeless waiting.  
Ukrainians,  
And Georgians,  
Uzbeks,  
And all the others . . .  
Nations with their customs,  
Their own history,  
And languages,  
And hate . . .  
But you, light-heartedly,  
In indolence and smugness,  
Deny them even right of difference!  
You call that land  
Of cursed and damned oppression,  
Just 'Russia' . . .  
You don't call it,  
Even in jest,  
A 'Union of Rightless, Mocked Republics' . . .  
As if we all were dead,  
Already dead,  
And never had existed . . .

But what is it to you?  
You feel so just and noble!  
So slightly bored,  
And, really, quite content –  
That quiet flows the Don . . .  
Excuse my small intrusion!  
I hope your last martini  
Was just right. . . .

ZOJA KOHUT

*Political Emigration*

Don't let us all be so self-satisfied,  
Drunk with our own dream, visionary and vain. . . .  
Without us the Ukraine will long abide –  
But we shall not live long without Ukraine!

If only sometimes, then, let us recall,  
Amid our cries and our presumptuous din:  
While our Ukraine will have no time at all  
To seek us, we've an age to seek her in! . . .

ZOJA KOHUT

*Melancholy*

To hearts and marsh bad weather's come,  
Stuck ankle-deep is each idea;  
One's soul would drown in tedium,  
But puddles are too shallow here,

Like all of us. Minute tears fall,  
Our pity's smallish, anger thin;  
Good deeds? — yes, but the dose is small,  
Small too our store of deeds of sin. . . .

Impulses that don't leave the ground,  
Small fires with but a match-flame's leap . . .  
Ah! deeply should one's soul be drowned,  
But round us here all's ankle-deep. . . .

ZOJA KOHUT

*A Few Words*

Coffee in the Espresso. I sit smoking.  
The juke box for a cent plays 'I Love You'.  
The noisy young in jeans are laughing, joking,  
While I sit drinking my unsweetened brew —

For weight control. . . . My hair has its first sprinkling  
Of lighter threads where it's begun to grey,  
And in my soul: more than a little wrinkling,  
Sadness and scars that may have come to stay. . . .

And still there's room for great, uncostly pleasures,  
Room for a world of sweet contentment too!  
Would anyone exchange such store of treasures  
For youthful mirth and one-cent 'I Love You'?

ZOJA KOHUT

*Native City*

City of my first words, and first dreams too,  
Of my first tears, my first steps' hesitations,  
Of first high heel on almost grown-up shoe,  
Of first anxieties and consolations.

Where will your like again be seen on earth,  
City with showers or sunlight overflowing?  
Native in grief, familiar in your dearth,  
Your dirt and cleanness, white and colours, showing . . .

In what land such a river shall I meet  
And recognize such banks as those which lined it?  
And if my barefoot steps crunch on some street  
Like street of yours, where ever shall I find it?

Where else on earth will candid evenings smell  
Of dreamt or fabled stars? Where even ringing  
Within our ears of the mosquitoes' bell  
Sounds like a lullaby that someone's singing . . .

Where else through daybreak's doors of light appears  
That castled world of wonders and adornings?  
O native city of my youthful years —  
Of first high heels and my first happy mornings . . .

ZOJA KOHUT

*Beauty*

The first frost-scented snow, the dew we find  
As garments clothing early-morning flowers . . .  
Beauty is not a thing known by the mind,  
Beauty is what's felt in this soul of ours.

In bright look that evades divining search,  
Perhaps in spring leaves on the willow tree,  
Perhaps in smell of incense in the church,  
Or else in dream unfinished, it could be. . . .

In recollections we sense beauty's call,  
In whisperings among the reeds at night. . . .  
On hungering human souls does it not fall  
In the bright shafts of its eternal light? . . .

ZOJA KOHUT

*Do Not Ask . . .*

Do not ask why you live, with what aim  
Your soles trudge, while the miles mount behind them. . . .  
Look around you, poor wretch: can you claim  
Life has meanings and you have divined them?

Watch the grass, see it sprout; earth is fed,  
Earth is watered, with man's perspiration. . . .  
Why, amid all this, worry your head  
Ever more with your interrogation?

Calm yourself then! Live so as to know  
Just one day, then the next. . . . For what reason?  
Why? Whence? How? — Just in order to grow  
On the earth, and to ripen in season. . . .

*'Distance in the quicksands'*

Distance in the quicksands. Past the circle  
Of rusty horizon, the sun has dropped down  
As though it were a mortally wounded bird.  
The wild sub-tropical wind-storm resounds.

Unfolded here are neither wings nor sails!  
I cannot fly, and have no power to swim. . . .  
I am warmed and I am animated  
Only by what my daughter's letters bring.

Let the headache hammer on inside me,  
Let the bushes and the earth be shrivelled,  
From all sides let calamities arrive . . .  
And still my thoughts are only of my kindred.

Let the swinging gate keep creaking there,  
Let the sand over the threshold mount higher . . .  
Before my sight are spread the spacious steppes,  
And a native village, now unrecognized.

Scrub and saltbush stretch along the roadway,  
And the green grass is all dried up with thirst. . . .  
Do send me letters, my children, for only  
By their means am I living in the world.

PAWLO DUBIW

*Credo*

When in our former days this distant nation  
To all of us gave welcome here,  
The meaning of the word 'assimilation'  
Was more than once made very clear.

As we began to make ourselves known better  
To an environment still new,  
Words having 'f' or 'b' as their first letter  
Would often greet our point of view.

Still you shall never hear us deprecating  
Our road that led us to these parts,  
Though faithfully we'll keep reiterating  
This credo, firm-based in our hearts:

'Here too, at work in far-flung emigration,  
Our sweat poured out on foreign earth,  
We must stay ever faithful to the nation  
Which into this world gave us birth.'

Melbourne, 1967

DMYTRO CHUB

*Autumn Melodies*

Sombre night, morose and cold,  
In the window its black robes  
Has suspended.  
Everywhere the rain drums on,  
And grey pavements have been washed  
Again and again.  
The street lamp's like a butterfly. . . .  
In the dark its spreading light  
Wanly falls;  
Then, as though convulsed, it shivers  
And, while shaking, feebly licks  
Night's black wall.  
Covered with a veil, all sleeps  
Where was spilt so recently  
Creative day.  
Only between the wind's gusts,  
Where the branches wildly swung,  
The noise abates.

DMYTRO CHUB

*Autumn is Over*

Already the autumn is past; lone woods stand,  
All leafless and bare their trees showing;  
And birds on the wing to some far-away land,  
Forsaking bright orchards, are going.

One week, and the roofs and the courtyard below  
Will vanish where thick snow has drifted;  
In winds of harsh winter the snowstorm will blow  
And feathery snowflakes be lifted.

In whiteness the hedges and paths will have gone  
And brooks under snow will be dreaming;  
Where powdery carpets will beckon them on,  
The children to play will go streaming.

Already the autumn is past; lone woods stand,  
All leafless and bare their trees showing;  
And birds on the wing to some far-away land,  
Forsaking bright orchards, are going.

CLAUDIA ROSCHKA

*Spring*

Could one not love the spring? She is ever  
Filled with laughter and sunlight and cheer.  
Could one not praise the spring? Surely never!  
To us all she is generous and dear.

A gay tune is the song she is singing;  
The swift streams and the winds hear her call.  
Youthful hopes are the gift she is bringing  
As she comes to awaken us all.

Roused from sleep, nature firmly erases  
The last traces of winter that cling.  
Clothed in holiday flowers, all earth praises  
As it pours forth its song to the spring.

On all sides it's like laughter resounding —  
Soft anemones charming our sight,  
In the trees and the grass spring's pulse pounding,  
And the streams and hills' blue sheer delight.

From the spring we draw strength for creating.  
Mild and bright is the gift her days bring.  
Could one not love her, then? After waiting,  
All the world is saluting the spring.

CLAUDIA ROSCHKA

*Goodnight! . . .*

Time goes, unrestrainable and fleeting,  
Soon the guests will hear sleep's friendly greeting.  
Stars already light the sky's blue spaces,  
Past us in a trice each swift hour races.

Right into the house the moon is peeping,  
It's already time for restful sleeping.  
Poplars cast their shadows ever longer,  
Day bows low as night-time waxes stronger.

All things round have done as night has bidden,  
Under a dark cover earth lies hidden.  
At the window: singing, dancing, humming –  
From the wind that lullaby is coming.

To the dew the grass and flowers are sending  
Welcomes; dozing willow trees are bending.  
Birds sing farewell songs: where night has found them,  
Softly their 'Goodnight!' is heard around them.

FEDIR KOWAL

*Arab Horses*

Granada nights come on their white mounts  
that speeding from Arabia bore them,  
and the horses' heads are bowing down,  
bent low to the mown grass that called them.

With yellowish ribbons are their necks girt,  
red tassels are on their heads, and behind them  
rolls a mirror of enormous size —  
and the sun sews for them their embroidered shirts.

FEDIR KOWAL

*My Shadow*

When thunder on the tree-tops my sound rends  
and, cunning as a panther, darkness nears;  
as a stump of day over the shores bends  
and night bestows antenna-like wealth of ears;

when in a crown of black calms, like a queen,  
non-being sits, instead of fountain's play;  
your sight observes that figure which has been –  
I reap this stubble's spikes to take away.

*I Love Her*

I love her, the beloved land that bore me,  
I love her in prosperity or woe,  
Love her with all my heart, whether before me  
Meek, gay, or sad and grieving she may show.

I love her spacious meadows and the seeming  
Unbounded breadth of my own native plains,  
The waters where Slavutyeh-Dnieper's\* gleaming,  
The proud heights the Carpathian peak attains.

I love her forests and the greenness springing  
From branches rustling lightly in the breeze,  
The soft spring songs the nightingales are singing,  
The pine woods' early wild anemones.

I love her towns and native village places,  
Houses snow-white, unending row on row,  
Where round about them with a garland's graces  
The gay, adorning cherry orchards grow.

\* Slavut, with its diminutives, is one of the old names of the River Dnieper.—*Translator's note.*

BOZENNA KOWALENKO.

*Leisure*

I wander on the ocean shore  
Where waves in sunlit lustre play.  
The sea takes my caresses, or  
With frightening sound drives me away.

I plunge in watery abyss  
That fondles and embraces one;  
But only for a moment this —  
Until a foaming wave has run

And caught me on its lifted wing  
And borne me to where the wind blows  
Sorrow far from me as I sing  
And boundless fortune overflows.

TANIA VOLOSCHKA

*My Ukraine*

O my Ukraine, beloved land of mine,  
Bright homeland where I spent my childhood days!  
Carpathian heights where sky-blue spaces shine,  
How often in my dreams on you I gaze!

In all the world there can be found no flower  
Such as I picked. . . . The Dnieper's waves I've seen –  
And to forget them is beyond my power. . . .  
So too with all your splendid woods of green. . . .

Without your welcome, through the world I've gone,  
Wandering on in many a foreign part;  
But my Ukraine, my native land, lives on  
As an eternal treasure in my heart.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

**WOLODYMYR BILAJIW:** A native of the Ukraine's Donets Basin, Bilajiw was born into a coalminer's family in 1925. During World War II he was among hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians transported to Germany, and after the war he refused to return to his homeland. Emigrated to Australia in 1949, and lived in Newcastle and Sydney until 1954, working in the BHP steelworks and various metal-fabrication shops. At the same time, was active in the Ukrainian community, mostly as a freelance contributor to various publications in Australia, Europe, and USA. Since 1954 has lived in Philadelphia, taking an active part in Ukrainian political and cultural life in exile. Began to write poetry immediately after the war, under the name of 'W. Bilyk', contributing to numerous magazines and anthologies. Collection of poems published in USA in 1970, representing work written between 1946 and 1963. A second collection was accepted for publication in 1972.

**DMYTRO CHUB:** The Ukrainian region of Poltava was the birthplace in 1906 of this poet, whose real name is Dmytro Nytczenko. After early education, he worked for some years as a locksmith, mechanic, etc., then continued his studies and worked for several years in publishing houses. Served in World War II and was taken prisoner by the Germans. Emigrated to Australia in 1949 and lives in Newport, Victoria, taking part in the activities of various Ukrainian literary associations, etc., in Australia and overseas. Numerous works in verse and prose published here and abroad.

**LYDLA DALEKA:** Born in the Ukraine in 1903 and educated there in schools and pedagogic institute (diploma in science). Emigrated to Australia in 1950 and lives in Adelaide. Literary work published in Ukrainian magazines and anthologies in various continents. Has published a collection of poems, *Zephyr and Breezes*, and a book of children's verse. Is keenly interested in the technical aspects and problems of prosody, especially euphony.

**PAWLO DUBIW:** Born and educated in the Ukraine, majoring in literature at university and attending night classes in journalism. Hoped

to become a university professor, but during World War II was sent to Germany for slave labour in a factory, where he worked twelve hours a day for no payment and little food. Emigrated in 1949, lives in East Malvern (Melbourne), and works for the newspaper *Ukrainian Settler*. Literary work published in various newspapers, magazines, and anthologies, and some of his poems set to music.

**KONSTANTYN HIMMELREICH:** Born in the Ukraine in 1913. Graduated from university in 1935, and from 1938 to 1941 continued post-graduate studies in ichthyology in the Ukrainian Academy of Science, Kiev. In World War II was an officer in the Red Army, but finished up with the rank of colonel in the Ukrainian guerrilla army which fought against the German and Russian oppressors. Began writing poetry at the age of fifteen, but refrained from publishing it because its themes were not of the political kind demanded by communism. Began to publish his poetry and short stories in 1948 in Ukrainian newspapers and magazines established in Germany. Emigrated to Australia in 1951 and lives at Glenroy, Victoria.

**ZOJA KOHUT:** A native of Sumy, Eastern Ukraine, where she was born in 1925. At the time of her birth, her father, a pre-revolutionary lawyer, was in prison for belonging to the bourgeoisie, a crime in the eyes of the new Bolshevik régime. When she was eight, her father was sent to Siberia, whence he was later transferred to Central Asia. His wife and daughter followed him, and Zoja Kohut was educated in schools in Sverdlovsk, Novosibirsk, Barnaul, Tashkent, Chimkent, Samarkand, Namangan, and Alma-Ata. She returned to Sumy in 1939 after her father's unexpected release from prison. Left the Ukraine for Germany in 1943, and from 1946 studied philosophy in the university at Freiburg-Breisgau. Three years later she married and migrated to Australia. Lives in Victoria, belongs to various literary associations, and contributes regularly to Ukrainian newspapers, magazines, and anthologies published in Australia, USA, and Canada. Book of poems and prose, *Arabesques*, published in 1969.

**FEDIR KOWAL:** Born in the Ukraine in 1916, and studied philosophy. In 1943 he was captured by the Gestapo and sent to forced labour in Germany. Emigrated to Australia in 1949, worked in a gold-mine at Cobar, NSW, then moved to Sydney. Returned to Europe in 1950 and now lives in Munich. Published a book of poems in 1953 and has contributed to many anthologies, magazines, and newspapers.

**BOZENNA KOWALENKO:** Born in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine, in 1924. After completing secondary education, studied in the physics and mathematics faculty of Kiev University until it was closed down because of the German occupation during World War II. Married in 1942, and soon afterwards became a refugee in Western Europe. Emigrated to Australia in 1950 and for some years worked as a costing clerk in Melbourne. She and her husband now conduct their own business there. Began writing in her youth, but the first poems, along with all other belongings, were lost during the war. Contributes to Ukrainian anthologies and periodicals published in Australia, Europe, and Canada.

**IRYNA NARIZNA:** Born in 1902 in Kobelyaki, Ukraine. In 1922 emigrated to Czechoslovakia and studied Slavonic literatures in the Prague University. Collaborated in Western Ukrainian literary and children's magazines, and is the author of a collection of lyric poems and of six fairy tales in verse for children. Has lived in New South Wales since 1950.

**WASYL ONUFRIENKO:** Born in 1920 near Poltava, Ukraine, and educated first in the village school and then through a teachers' institute correspondence course. Took up journalism and in 1941 became literary editor of a newspaper in the Poltava region. In 1942, during the German occupation, he and his wife were transported to Germany to work in a factory near Cologne. After the war, spent four years in various DP camps, where he continued his journalistic work, and in 1949 they emigrated to Australia. Onufrienko was first employed as a timber worker, salesman, and clerk, and later became editor of the Sydney Ukrainian newspaper, *Free Thought*. Published his first poems about 1938, and is the author of two collections of them (1956 and 1961). Has also had a comedy produced on Ukrainian stages in Adelaide and Sydney. Believes he was the first Ukrainian to translate Australian poets into his language, his versions from Henry Kendall, Henry Lawson, Mary Gilmore, A. B. Paterson, A. L. Gordon and others having been published in magazines and newspapers abroad.

**CLAUDIA ROSCHKA:** A native of the Ukrainian city of Kharkov, where she was born in 1924. After finishing at high school, studied electro-technology at the University of Kharkov for two and a half years. During World War II Kharkov changed hands several times between the Russians and Germans, and late in 1943 Claudia Roschka and her family left the city just before the Red Army had retaken it. They

fled from country to country, a little way ahead of the communists each time, finishing in Germany shortly before the war ended in 1945. She there met her husband-to-be at an English-language school, and they emigrated to Australia in 1949, working at Berri, South Australia, for several months before moving to Adelaide, where they now live. She works as an accounting-machine operator, and, apart from writing, her hobbies are reciting and amateur acting in Ukrainian theatre groups. Poems published in the Ukrainian newspapers *Free Thought* and *Ukrainian Settler* and in various magazines.

**IVAN SMAL-STOTSKY:** Born in the Ukraine in 1905. Trained as a land surveyor, and later became a book-keeper. On the publication of his first novel, *The Peasant Girl*, the author was arrested by the NKVD as an enemy of the state and the book suppressed, this ending his career as a writer in his own country. Emigrated to Australia in 1949, lives at Oonoonba (Townsville), and is a pensioner. Has had several other books of prose published, and recently prepared a collection of his poems for publication. Has suffered greatly through separation from his wife, son, and daughter, whom he has not been able to see for twenty-five years.

**TANIA VOLOSCHKA:** Born in Kharkov in 1937, and baptised in secrecy by an Orthodox priest. Her father was imprisoned by the communists for taking part in the Ukrainian resistance movement. During the German occupation, he and his family were transported in railway waggons to forced-labour camps in Germany via Bulgaria, Bessarabia, Rumania, Hungary, and Poland. The last stage of the ten months' journey was by cattle train from Poland to Magdeburg, where they remained until the German capitulation. Thence they moved to a DP camp and in 1949 migrated to Australia. Tania Voloschka, who lives at Newcomb (Geelong), started writing at the age of nine, and her work has appeared in Ukrainian newspapers and magazines in Australia, Canada, Germany, England, and USA.

**EUGENE ZOZE:** Born in the Poltava region of the Ukraine in 1917 and educated in technical schools there. Employed as a book-keeper until World War II, when he was captured by the Germans and sent to forced labour in Berlin. Emigrated to France in 1948 and to Australia in 1951 and lives in Adelaide. Started writing poetry in the Ukraine and has had works published in Ukrainian newspapers and magazines in Australia, France, and Germany. Several novels also serialized in newspapers in Germany. His favourite hobby is gardening.

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