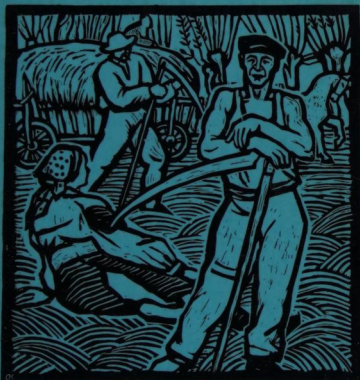


# Where the West Winds Blow

## The Ukrainian Canadians in Canada



Lorraine Devorski



**WHERE THE WEST WINDS BLOW  
THE UKRAINIAN—CANADIANS IN CANADA**

**Lorraine Devorski**

*Initiated and sponsored by the  
London Council for Adult Education  
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## IN THE BEGINNING

The Ukrainian people were not happy in their home country of the Ukraine. They were very poor. They were not free to practise what they believed. Many of them decided to leave the Ukraine.

The Ukrainian people heard of Canada in their home country. They heard that the streets in Canada were "paved with gold." The Ukrainians were willing to go to this new land if it would bring them freedom. They decided to go to the Canadian prairies to begin a new life.

When they arrived on the prairies, they saw differently. There was nothing there! All they saw were trees and grassland. "How can we live here?" they asked themselves. But in their hearts they knew there was no going back. They were





*Fifty Years of Soviet Art*

not free in the Ukraine. They would fight to be free here, but it would not be easy.

The Ukrainians fought the land to make it ready for growing crops. Without crops, they would die from hunger before the winter was over. But crops took a long time to grow, and the people were often very hungry. For days, they would eat whatever old potatoes they could find.

They fought for money, too. They needed money to buy food to last until their crops grew. For extra money, many of the men had to leave their families. They had to work on the railroads and in the mines. These men also had to care for their own farms. Even with two jobs, they were still very poor. And, with the men away, the women had to take care of everything. They had to farm, cut wood, and care for their children. The women were all alone and very far from any help.

But, most of all, the Ukrainians fought against other people's hatred. Many Canadians did not like the Ukrainians because they were not born in Canada. They did not like them because they came from Russia and did not speak English well.

Many English people called the Ukrainians "bohunks." Often, the English people tried to

get the better of the Ukrainian people. A poor Ukrainian man might work on another man's farm all day for the promise of one dollar. But when the day ended and it was time for the tired worker to go home to his own farm, often he was not paid!

Life was not easy for these Ukrainian pioneers. They were far away from the only life they knew and loved. Many left Canada to go back to the Ukraine, but many stayed to make Canada their home. They faced the problems of their new life.

The streets of the Canadian prairies were not "paved with gold" when the Ukrainian people first arrived. But their hard work, sweat, and prayers opened the wild prairies. They were true prairie pioneers.

The Homesteaders—

Day after day they toiled  
to make this land their own,  
they ploughed their tears in the soil,  
while the wind drowned out their moans.

## GOODBYE MAMA AND PAPA

round is a  
teardrop  
quick as a  
wink  
kiss me  
goodbye  
don't stop and  
think  
force me a  
smile  
hug me and  
then  
turn your back as I  
leave  
throw your tears to the  
wind

## PLOUGHING THE WILD WEST

I stand here in  
the field, sweat runs  
down my face, soaking  
my shirt.



Harvesting. *Nikolai Ivanovich Piskarev*

Looking around me, I  
see endless bush;  
trees, stones, roots. . .  
more trees, stones,  
roots. . .  
Will the work ever  
end? Will the  
land break under this  
old plough?  
The oxen lift their  
sad heads, our eyes meet,  
are those tears running  
down their big,  
old faces?

### GREEN SUNDAY

the winter winds  
stop  
blowing, across  
the prairie lands  
a breath  
of spring is felt  
on the children's  
faces  
as they play

the gentle winds  
sing  
of spring's return  
and mark the  
beginning  
of a fresh new  
world,  
white snows melt  
giving way to green

the Ukrainian people  
gather  
in May, to pray  
for the land  
in hope  
that it will  
bring about  
healthy crops, fresh,  
green crops

the priest is then  
led  
into the fields  
to bless the  
land which is already  
showing  
bits of green grass,

farms and animals alike  
wear fresh green branches  
on this special  
    Green Sunday

## BROKEN PROMISES

They told me I needed  
ten dollars  
to get a home in  
this proud land.  
They told me I needed  
to clear  
thirty acres of land.  
They said they would give me  
money, oxen and tools  
to help me on my way,  
and in only three year's time  
this land would be my own.

So I left my home  
and family  
in Ukraine so far away,  
for the promises and hope



of owning land one day.  
But the promises they made me  
were broken with each  
new day  
until I was so lost, alone, and hungry,  
that I could not even pray. . .  
Thank God those broken promises  
are well behind me now.

## THE EASTER EGGS

What do they mean  
any more?  
they were important  
to the old Ukrainian women  
who, with shaking hands,  
would paint lines around  
the egg to mean  
“forever,”  
and a bright green  
pine tree  
which stood for “youthfulness  
and health,”  
but what do they mean  
any more

to us who are so young?  
Ukraine is so far away, and  
Canada is now our home,  
we have lost the meaning that the  
Easter eggs once held for our parents—  
now they mean so very little,  
they are just pieces  
of art  
to make pretty our  
Canadian homes

### A LOST SONG

Mama is quiet today  
as she bakes her bread,  
the kitchen  
is warm and comfortable  
in spite of the cold prairie  
wind that blows  
against  
the window,  
but  
Mama is far away  
from her little kitchen now,



*Nikolai Ivanovich Piskarev*

I can tell by the  
look in her eyes  
and the old Ukrainian song  
that I can just  
    barely  
hear her singing. . .  
it's a 'sad song  
about some old forgotten time,  
an old pain. . . an even older joy,  
    today she sings quietly  
    lost within her song,  
I would like to sing with her,  
but I do not know the words.

## *WORD LIST*

### IN THE BEGINNING

bohunks	prairies
freedom	prayers
fought	railroads
hatred	Russia
mines	sweat
paved	

### GOODBYE MAMA AND PAPA

teardrop	wink
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*WORD LIST (Continued)*

**PLOUGHING THE WILD WEST**

bush shirt

oxen sweat

plough/ploughing

**THE HOMESTEADERS**

drowned ploughed

moans toiled

*WORD LIST (Continued)*

**GREEN SUNDAY**

bits	pray
bless	priest
gather	return
prairie	

**BROKEN PROMISES**

acres	pray
oxen	tools

*WORD LIST (Continued)*

THE EASTER EGGS

any more	pine
art	shaking
forever	youthfulness

A LOST SONG

barely	Mama
comfortable	pain
in spite of	within
joy	



