

RHYTHM WITHOUT RHYME: THE POETRY OF ALEKSEJ REMIZOV

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Remizov's reputation as a leading Russian writer of considerable influence in the first quarter of the twentieth century and as one of the great Russian émigré writers seems to be secure despite Soviet attempts to ignore or denigrate his work. Dmitry Mirsky's contention in 1925 that "the recent development of Russian prose does not proceed from Gorky or Andreev or Bunin, but from two writers of the Symbolist party—Bely and Remizov,"¹ has withstood the test of time for fifty years. It was affirmed in 1976 by Patricia Carden, who aptly demonstrated the leading role of Bely, Remizov, and Xlebnikov in shaping the Modernist movement in pre-Revolutionary Russia.² Gleb Struve's prophetic contention of thirty years ago that "should Bunin be assigned the primary role in the chapter on the émigré period in some future history of Russian literature, then, in all probability, Remizov, who resembles him not in the least, would be placed next to him"³ has been realized in the past decade: first by a double issue of the Evanston *TriQuarterly* devoted to Russian émigré literature in 1973 which began with a tribute to Remizov and several translations of his work,⁴ and more recently by the appearance of two issues of the *Russian Literature Triquarterly* devoted solely to Remizov.⁵

However, in all the critical commentary scattered over three quarters of a century in Russian, Russian émigré, and Western literature, nothing has been said about Remizov's poetry. Perhaps this was due to the small number of poems that he penned, perhaps to the exclusion of most of them from his eight-volume collected works, or perhaps simply to the difficulty in locating his verse. Whatever the reason, it is rather surprising that the poetry of a writer renown for his experimentation with rhythmic prose, of a writer for whom "all the techniques of poetry . . . [were] justified in prose writing,"⁶ has escaped critical attention. Let us attempt a remedy by examining the nature of Remizov's poetry and by speculating on its function in his development as a modernist writer.

Remizov's attempts at writing poetry would appear to have been confined to two periods: 1902-1903, and the years of Revolution, 1917-1919. Works of the first period comprise at least six rhythmic personal mood pieces, "Osennaja pesnja" ("Autumn Song"), "Mgla" ("Darkness"), "Sever-

Alexej Remizov. *Approaches to a Protean Writer* / Ed. by G. Slobin. Columbus: Slavica, [1987]. 286 p. (UCLA Slavic Studies; Vol. 16).

nye cvety" ("Northern Flowers"), "Verenica dnež" ("The Skein of Days"), "Posle znoja želanij" ("After the Heat of Desire"), and "Preljudii" ("Preludes"); two incantations, both entitled "Zaklinanie vetra" ("Conjuring the Wind"); a half-dozen rhythmic prose poems on Zyrian themes of which only four can be considered verse poems, "Omeľ i En," "Poleznica," "Kut'ja-Vojsy," and "Iketa"; a short modernist lyric, "Ètoj nočju strannož . . ." ("This strange night . . ."); a poem dedicated to his daughter, "Nataše" ("To Natasha"); a translation of a Latvian lullaby, "Medvežja kolybel'naja pesnja" ("The Bears' Lullaby"); and a longer narrative poem, "Iuda predateľ" ("Judas the Betrayer"). The poetry of the second period consists of three lyric responses to the Revolutions of 1917, "Krasnoe znamja" ("The Red Banner"), "O sud'be ognennoj" ("On Fiery Fate"), and "Zenitnye zovy" ("Zenithal Summons").

Remizov had begun experimenting with rhythmicized prose by autumn 1902, shortly before meeting Valerij Brjusov, the doyen of Russian modernist poetry who described Remizov as "my admirer" and a "rather confused maniac."⁷ His first published work, "Plač devuški pered замуžestvom" ("A Maiden's Lament Before Marriage"), a rhythmicized prose lament adapted from the Zyrian "Bördan Kylias,"⁸ was soon followed by his first attempts at free verse. In "Osennjaja pesnja" Remizov personifies autumn in a cry for love, at the moment of colorful beauty and farewell before the onset of winter. Despite a variable, unstructured line length, the piece was consistently cast in binary meter, primarily iambic which shifts in five instances to trochaic:

Осенняя песня⁹

Любите же меня, любите!
 Любуйтесь на красу прощальных
 взоров!
 Вся кровь моя при первой встрече,
 при легком дуновенье смертель-
 ной стужи щитом багряным по-
 крыла грудь мою.
 Я золотом и тусклым серебром
 устлала все дороги.
 В моих глазах последний жаркий
 трепет заблистал.
 Я ухожу от вас . . .
 Любите же меня, любите!
 На небе зори яркие уж зиму воз-
 вещают, и слезы, неиссякая, льют-
 ся из мутной тучи.
 Настало время уйти от вас . . .

Но пусть же мой прощальный взор,
 и жажды и забвенья полный, без-
 умьем пышет;
 Пусть красота идет аккордов груст-
 ных земле холодной, цветам
 увядшим!
 Любите же меня, любите!

A companion piece, "Mgla," displays an obvious tendency toward ternary meter, which Remizov later was to prefer. The basic metrical pattern was forcefully established by the initial sentence/line in dactylic tetrameter, and was subsequently retained as a base in the five sentences which followed, varying in length from four to fourteen metric feet. Of the total fifty feet, ten broke with the basic dactylic pattern, usually by the absence of an unstressed syllable. The melancholy mood of the poet in isolation, tortured by debilitating thoughts and memories fostered by his perception of natural phenomena, serve as precursor to a whole series of mood pieces which he was to write in the final year of his Northern exile.

Мгла¹⁰

Тихо спускается мглистая ночь.
 Измокшие ели зябнут и дремлют в тумане.
 Скучные, долгие песни заводит где-то в трубе
 ветер сердитый и хмурый.
 . . . Кто-то лениво бродит по крыше . . .
 Мысли и сны, как мотивы разбитой шарманки
 хрипло, старческим стоном всё
 повторяют о вечности лжи
 и о пошлости масок.
 Хочется вспомнить хоть тень чарующей
 сказки.
 А дождик царапает стекла, и часы крикливо
 поют о смерти ненужного дня.

Attempts at traditional syllabo-accentual versification represented an anomaly in Remizov's work, for most of his early efforts were directed at developing lyric rhythmic prose mood pieces and occasionally free verse, all of which he grouped together in three sections under the general title "Polunoščnoe solnce. Poèmy" ("The Midnight Sun. Poems.") in 1908.¹¹ The first section, entitled "Belaja bašnja" ("The White Tower"), consisted of a series of lyric prose fragments depicting the poet's imprisonment and exile. Despite numerous features normally associated with verse such as alliteration, repetition of key words and whole phrases, syntactic parallelism, and the frequent use of a one-line sentence; the lack of rhyme and of a discerni-

ble underlying metrical pattern, coupled with the tendency to equate the paragraph with a single sentence usually one, two or three lines in length, would indicate that the piece be viewed as rhythmic prose rather than poetry. Apparently Remizov himself considered this to be the case, for three years later he included an expanded and revised version of the work in the story (*rasskaz*) entitled "V plenu" ("In Captivity").¹²

The second section of "Polunoščnoe solnce" comprised eighteen varied short pieces: some were written in the rhythmic prose style of "Belaja bašnja" and were subsequently included in "V plenu" or other prose works,¹³ two were clearly poems in the trochaic meter, while others were penned in a rhythmic free verse which retained the integrity of the verse line and exhibited an underlying syllabo-accentual meter. Of the two trochaic poems entitled "Zaklinanie vetra," the one cast in four stanzas of trochaic tetrameter best embodies the Zyrian belief which inspired the two incantations: namely, that the wind is stupid and can be easily quieted by being told that his grandmother is alive. The second poem displays a personal lyric element by introducing the poet's sleeping daughter Nataša as the motivation for his conjuring the wind, which is emphasized metrically by replacing the basic trochaic meter with one iamb and two amphibrachs (lines nine and ten). Although Remizov handles the basic meter well, the two poems are relatively poor in rhyme, which is largely verbal or absent altogether.

Заклинание ветра¹⁴

[1]

Что ты, глупый, гудишь, ветер,
что ты, буйный, мечешь листья,
пляшешь, стонешь, воешь, колешь . . .
Ветер, бабушка жива!

Волны в речке ты взбурляешь,
ивы долу пригнеташь,
едкой пылью воздух точишь . . .
Ветер, бабушка жива!

Темный ветер, ты не слышишь:
не рыданье, не стенанье,
пски, визги, стрекотня . . .
Ветер, бабушка жива!

Успокойся, ветер горький,
утиши свой трепет звонкий,
ветер, страшно! . . . заклиная . . .
Ветер, бабушка жива!

[2]

Ты скрипишь,
Ты гудишь,
Ты в окошко стучишь—
Мы окно закрыли.
Ты в трубе,
Ты ворчишь—
Печку затопили.
Не стучи, ты,
Не кличь—
Разбудишь Наташу!
Крепко пальчики сложила,
Губки алые раскрыла,
Тихо, тихо дышит.
Но придет твоя пора,
Позову тогда тебя.
Ты возьмешь ее на плечи,
Унесешься с ней далече.
Ветер, ты ей все скажи,
Все песчинки покажи.
А потом, когда вернешься,
Свечи мы засветим—
Ветер!
Ветер, ты уймешься!

Of greater interest and significance, however, were his experiments in free verse such as "Severnnye cvety" ("Northern flowers"), a lyric mood piece in which the description of northern flowers by animating metaphors culminates in a decadent death wish. When the poem was first published in 1903, the capitalization of the first letter in each of its twenty lines underscored the primacy of the poetic line. In the 1908 version, however, six words were dropped and prose rules of capitalization were applied.¹⁵ Although the poem does not at first glance yield to scansion, if the first stressed syllable of each line is placed in a vertical line,¹⁶ then a definite tendency toward a ternary meter with variable line length (seven to seventeen syllables or two to six ternary feet) emerges. Postulating a dactylic base and indicating missing syllables with an "o" and extra syllables with an "x," a rather consistent metrical pattern emerges:

Северные цветы

Цепкий плаун колючими хищными лапами	— — — o — — — — —
Ложится на темнозеленую, пышную грудь лишаев.	— — — — — — — — —
Вереск суровый, бесстрастный, как старик <i>посидевший</i> ,	— — — — — x — — —
Стоит в изголовье.	— — — — —
Сохнет олений мох, <i>пенной застывшей</i> , грустно вздыхая,	— — — o — oo — — — o — — —
Когда вся в изумрудах ползет зеленица.	— — — — — — — — —
В медных шлемах, алея телами,	— o — — — — —
Стройно идут тучи войска кукушкина льна.	— — — oo — — — o — — —
А кругом пухом северных птиц	— — oo — o — — —
Бледно-зеленые мхи, <i>лишаи</i> к слям бегут:	— — — — — oo — — —
Из трясины змей выползает линnea	— — — — — — — — —
И, ласкаясь, гигантов лесных обнимает,	— — — — — — — — —
Выше, выше по старым стволам пробираясь,	— o — — — — — — — — —
Отравляя побеги, <i>в корни вонзаясь</i> .	— — — — — o — — —
Роскошным ковром, бледно-пурпурный,	— — — oo — — — — —
Будто забрызганный кровью, по болотам раскинулся	— — — — — x — — —
Мертвый мох, желанья будя подойти и уснуть,	— o — o — — — — — — — — —
Уснуть навсегда . . .	— — — — —
Запах прели и гнили, как вуаль дорогая,	— o — — — — — x — — —
Покрывает черты ядовитые, полные смерти.	— — — — — — — — —

In a poem theoretically consisting of ninety-three ternary feet, there are three instances of extra unstressed syllables, ten instances of monosyllabic deletions (i.e. substitution of dactyls with trochees), and five instances of disyllabic deletions. Four of the latter and five of the monosyllabic deletions are accompanied by a strong caesura, while the remaining monosyllabic deletions emphasize important word combinations (*olenij mox, v mednyx šlemax, mertvyj mox, zapax preli*). The fact that all of the deviations in the basic metrical pattern have rhythmic function and that the number

of deviant feet comprise less than 19% of the total number of feet enables us to characterize the basic nature of this work to be a poem, albeit considerably more free formally than is usually encountered in Russian verse.

Four more of the eighteen pieces also lend themselves to an analysis essentially similar to that of "Severnye cvety": "Poleznica," "Kut'ja-Vojsy," and "Iketa" scanning in dactylic and "Omel' i En" in iambic.¹⁷ All were inspired during Remizov's exile in Ust'-Syl'sk where he avidly listened to the stories and legends of the indigenous Zyrian populace. Omel' and En are two basic and infinite deities of the Zyrian mythological world who together created the Universe (Remizov likens the Zyrian dualistic myth of creation to the Bogomil-Christian myth among the Slavs of the joint creation of God and the Devil Satanail).¹⁸ The Zyrian dualistic myth (and Remizov's version of it) has unique motifs in that both Omel' and En, burdened by their might and unaware of their creative power, each decide on committing suicide, but in falling meet each other and realize their immortality. In this moment of rapture, En creates the visible world and retires to the heights of the Brusiany Hills (the Urals), but Omel' creates a strange world of swamps, of poisonous plants and serpents, of dreams and disillusionment. All beings of En's world live and die happily governed by the natural seasons, but Omel's children are lonely captives in En's sunny world and all their dreams and efforts to free themselves are futile. Poleznica lives in hiding in the fields, waiting for unwary children to wander near so that she can eat their entrails and be transformed into a woman of En's world. Similarly, female wood demons, despairing of their own transformation, live in the hope that union with a man will produce a human child that would lead them out from captivity into En's world, but are cruelly disillusioned by their non-human offspring with twisted heels, Iketa. Kut'ja-Vojsy are demons of the whirlwind who are empowered by lenten *ku'tja* to rule the world for twelve days, from Christmas Eve to Epiphany. Other pieces in the "Polunoščnoe solnce" collection also deal with creations of Omel' such as Kikimora (similar to its Russian counterpart), who seeks respite from despair through pranks and humor, and Bubylja, the house demon embodying the eternal despair of Omel'. None of these pieces, however, preserves the integrity of the poetic line nor lends itself to scansion.

Remizov's rhythmic poems on Zyrian themes were paralleled by a series of lyric mood pieces dating from January 1903, which have never been published.¹⁹ Although similar to the Zyrian poems in scansion and rhythm, they differ dramatically in mood, reflecting the poet's personal despair at spiritual exile and spent passions. In "Verenicy dnei" Remizov combines bold anthropomorphic imagery ("noč zorkim uxom . . . priľnula," "stajami

ptic razgovory duši poneslis") and original alliteration ("Ja sledil za tem tēmny'm, temnee, čem t'ma") with what were soon to become modernist clichés of lyric terror (*žitko*), abstraction (*kto-to*, *on*, *o čem-to*, *čto-to*):

Вереницы дней²⁰

Задумчиво-тихо.

Темная ночь зорким ухом к окошку прильнула.
Мысли льются слезами, красные, бледные мысли.

Жутко.

Кто — это, кто?
Слова шелестят, застонали лобзанья.
Окно ужаснулось: безгромная молния пасть
голубую открыла.

Трепетно-тихо.

В тоске цепенею, затаился, прислушиваюсь
жадно.

О повтори, повтори!

Красные, бледные мысли льются слезами.

Долго не мог я заснуть в эту ночь.

Мне виделся кто-то невидимый в изголовье моем.

В стекла тонкими пальцами дождь колотил.

Прохожий о чем-то кричал . . .

Затихало, затихло.

Забывшие капли повторяли одно только слово и умирали.

Открывая глаза, я следил в темноте,

Я следил за тем темным, темнее, чем тьма, — он
стоял у окна.

Тишина затаилась.

Стаями птиц разговоры души понеслись,

И неясные мысли в людей превращаясь, шли вереницей:

безобразно-кричащие карлики, уроды гнусавые,
сладоострастные, великаны седые, туманные.

Я же хотел, так хотел рассказать о чем-то
томящем вон тому . . .

Он безмолвно стоял у окна.

И я уж вставал, подходил . . .

Так всю ночь.

Только поздно, под утро что-то тяжкое, колкое
придавило глаза, и веки сомкнулись.

Тысяча уст, перебивая друг друга, болтали,

Болтая, сливались.

А пасмурный день уж задергивал окна пыльной,
кисейною шторой.

In the companion piece "Posle znoja želanij," also cast in a rhythmicized ternary meter, modernistic abstraction ("I čto-to zasmejalos', zaplakalo i

zasmejalos'"), beasts of passion (*jarostnyj zver'*), anthropomorphism, fragrant flowers and summer skies are combined with what will become major Remizovian themes—the wisdom of apes (*mudrost' obez'jan'ja*) and the transitory nature of life, symbolized by the image of a large blind fly buzzing aimlessly:

После зноя желаний²¹

Катится легкими, звонкими струями дождь с летнего неба.
Летнее небо — сад черных душистых цветов.
И мелькают, скользят, вырываются жгутя груди голубеющих, млеющих молний.
И стальными когтями бьет об утесы огненных звезд
отдаленных страшный, испачканный
кровью, яростный зверь,
Бьет и ревет.
Окна раскрыты.
Я один. . .
Я стараюсь проникнуть в тайну взбешенных туч и
музыки громов.
А предо мною идут изваянья всех прожитых моих дней:
Людей вспоминаю тех, что встречал, обнимал, убивал;
Сказки и песни и чары вновь оживают,
вновь оживают улыбки, гримасы.
И скотский гам гогочет и мудрость обезьянья глубоко-
мысленно мечтает.

И что-то засмеялось, заплакало и засмеялось.

Цветы, что сохраняю, как память дорогую, я вспомнил.
Их я срезал, когда встречал. . .
Узорный, старый ключ запел, и серебро на крышке,
тускло тая, заиграло.
Я отворил старинную шкатулку — ларец заветный.
Одни сухие листья и черные бутоны, как уголья за-
бытых очагов, на дне лежат. . .
Одни сухие листья!

И что-то засмеялось, заплакало и засмеялось.

Всею душой уношусь в душу иссохших и пыльных цветов,
Всею душой припадаю к сердцам.
Они мне сулили, они обещали. . .
И снова протягивают руки,
Слова, те слова, повторяют. . .

Вдруг муха зажужжала слепая, большая муха,
она ест человежье мясо-падаль.
К свечи, на желтое больное пламя, то подлетит, то
скроется, то снова вьется.
Невольное в душе, прикованное к бренности,
дрожит, смеясь.
И где-то в глубине бездонное, немое плачет.
Настала тишина, сон охмелевших туч.
Земля насыщенная, черная покойно, ровно дышет.
А муха все жужжит, жужжит. . .

A third mood piece, "Preljudii," which was probably written during Holy Week, reflects the author's despair at life's transitory nature, unfulfilled desires and his own ugliness. Although Christ's Resurrection would appear to offer hope for a new life, the poet remains bound to the past as he gropes for the future and views life as a series of cruel, mocking and humiliating tribulations. The seasonal shifts from summer to spring to autumn (the latter described in a cryptic three-lines which stress its transitory joys and sorrows) provide the poem with a cyclical nature, which locks the poet into an unending and inescapable human condition characterized by regret, hope, desire, and tribulation.

Прелюдии²²

Дни поцелуев и ласк на вечерней заре увядают.
Летняя, знойная ночь поджигает сонные села.
В кровавых лучах дымного солнца крепчает мороз.
Пожары желаний вспыхнули в тюрьмах.
Я прохожу по вешней дороге. . .
Липкие листья смеются,
Хруст же и немощь осенних навевает волнение
о бренности жизни.

Завтра Светлая Ночь.
Ходят туманные тучи, мягкие стелют постели
для белого света.
Снега, увядая, ткнут стебельки из синих снежинок.
Зной наступает, небо тоскует о грозах, ненастье.
Завтра новая жизнь, завтра солнце умрет!
О вчерашнем тоскую. . .
Сны призываю, где идут и сходятся тесно Вчераш-
нее с Завтра.

В печально-усталых аккордах,
 В блеклости меркнущих красок
 Внятен мне отзвук.
 С болью таюсь я с забытым желаньем
 В рубище смрадном уродства.
 Взоры страды безысходной неотступно следят и
 волнуют.

Медный оркестр адских желаний,
 Беззастенчиво-вольные струны,
 Бессовестно-пьяные позы
 Бурями хлещутся в знойно-темнеющих думах.
 Беззаботно-катыщийся хохот наступает потопом.
 Изуверские казни за казнями идут.

Облитая яростно-ярким закатом к утру седеет
 и жмется земная кора.
 В пышных уборах цветистый лишай загнивает
 ненастьем тягуче-слезливым.

Переменная осень . . .
 Трон вакханалий.
 Рыдание скрипок.

In graphic contrast to Remizov's amorphous free verse are the short, tightly knit lines of "Ètoj nočju strannoju . . ." ("This strange night . . ."), an undated poem which may have been written as early as 1903 but was published only in 1906.²³ It contains decadent, demonic overtones including a black mass, a tormented soul, and an appeal for a golden angel to dispel the grave-like cold of the poet's life. Yet other details and the mention of the soul as "flaming" and "blood-singed" also point to the possibility of reading the poem as a copulation metaphor. Remizov displays considerable formal freedom including the absence of rhyme in some stanzas and occasional deviation from the basic trochaic trimeter scheme (substitution of anapest dimeter in the first and second lines of verses four and eight, replacement of the first foot by an iamb in the second line of verses one, five, and six).

Этой ночью странной
 одетой луной,
 черную обедню
 я свершал с тобой.

В тесном круге замкнутый
 цепью теплых рук,
 гулками ступенями
 я спускался вглубь.

Сетью мук бесчисленных
 путала земля,
 путала, душила . . .
 плакала душа.

Прилетай, прилетай,
 ангел золотой,
 овевай, овевай,
 холод гробовой!

С робкой молитвой
 последних ступеней
 заиграло сердце
 пламенем ночей.

Этой ночью странной,
 одетой луной,
 черную обедню
 я свершал с тобой.

Кровью опаленная,
 слезы хороня,
 ты горишь, ты гаснешь,
 пленница-душа.

Прилетай, прилетай,
 ангел золотой,
 овевай, овевай,
 холод гробовой.

Remizov's attitude toward his poetry must have changed appreciably in the three years between the appearance of *Čortov log i polunoščnoe solnce* (*The Devil's Lair and the Midnight Sun*) in December 1907 and of the first volume of his *Sočinenija* (*Works*) in November 1910.²⁴ In preparing the eight-volume collection of his writing, Remizov carefully reviewed all of his work up through 1910, frequently making numerous and extensive revisions in style and substance.²⁵ It is therefore significant that the *poëmy* section of *Čortov log* . . . was totally dismantled. All of the published poems discussed above were systematically excluded from *Sočinenija* with the exception of "Severnye cvety," which was depoeticized and included as a prose fragment in the final section of "V plenu."²⁶ Only three poems were included as poems in Remizov's *Sočinenija*: a twenty-nine line dedicatory preface to his daughter Nataša ("Nataše") and a ten-line translation of a Latvian lullaby, "Medvežja kolybel'naja pesnja," in *Posolon'* (*Follow the Sun*), a collection of retold folktales and children's games;²⁷ and a 375-line lyric narrative poem, "Iuda predatel'," which was appended in the commentary to Remizov's tragedy about Judas Iscariot.²⁸ Apparently Remizov had renounced all his attempts at verse, whether relatively standard in rhyme and meter or rather free in unrhymed, deformed meter, and now turned full attention to the development of a rhythmic prose characterized by poetic features such as syntactical parallelism, repetition of words and phrases, alliteration, and palpable rhythm.

"Juda predateľ" stands unique among Remizov's early poetic efforts by virtue of its length and subject matter—the treatment of a biblical theme, the betrayal of Christ by his disciple Judas. Despite the poem's narrative function, the lyric elements tend to predominate, with the emotions of both the poet and of Judas playing equally important roles. An authorial prologue (the first of six numbered sections and consisting of thirty-four lines) delineates the theme of bitter woe ("O gore gor'koe derznuvšim . . .") that will befall him who betrays. Undoubtedly inspired by Luke 22:22 ("gore človeku tomu, imže predaetsja"), the prophetic threefold repetition of "O gore gor'koe" (lines 1 and 9) and "O gore, gore" (line 31) also carries overtones of Christ's sevenfold denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees.²⁹ The second section (consisting of fifty-three lines) combines lyric landscape descriptions with allusions to several of Christ's miracles, but focusses on presenting Judas as a lonely, melancholy soul with an ill-defined longing, closest to Christ of all the disciples, and, strangely, quotes Christ's words: "I iže ašče mene radi/ pogubit svoju dušu,/ obrjaščet ju."³⁰ Perhaps Remizov is suggesting, as did Leonid Andreev in his story "Juda Iskariot" which was also published in 1907, that Judas was the most faithful of the disciples in that he knowingly facilitated the immortality of Christ's teachings through betrayal which led to His crucifixion and resurrection. The inevitability of Christ's death is underscored in section three (consisting of fifty-three lines), while Judas' decision and betrayal are described in section four (consisting of forty-six lines), indicating that Judas had only feigned the role of the betrayer because he believed in Christ, the Son of God, and in His godly powers. The lyric first-person realization of betrayal (the seventeen-line section five) conveys the author's emotions as well as those of Judas and represents the climax of the work:

5.[lines 187-203]

О, Господи,
я предавал Тебя . . .
Пытал терпенье
в исканьях тщетных.
Хотел стать на судьбу пятою,
расшатать,
поправить что-то . . .
И столько раз,
любя и веря,
тяжелым словом
оскорбленье бросал за оскорбленьем
и наносил любви желанной
за раной рану.

И вдруг очнувшись,
топтал поруганное сердце.
О, Господи,
Я предавал Тебя . . .

The final section (consisting of 172 lines) depicts the Last Supper according to a composite of the four gospels (relying most heavily on the Gospel of St. John), then shifts to a lyric description of Judas' horror and despair at the realization that in his zeal to glorify Christ, the Son of God, he has betrayed Christ, his fellow man. Morally destroyed, Judas repents and dies. The entire poem is effectively rendered in free verse with varying line length, in an elevated lyric style with an underlying iambic meter. There is no indication that Remizov again returned to verse composition prior to the Russian Revolution.

The Revolutions of 1917 must have had a tremendous effect on Remizov, for they prompted an unusually strong lyric response in a genre that could only be described as an indefinable composite of free verse and rhythmic prose. "Krasnoe znamja," Remizov's reaction to the February Revolution in Petrograd,³¹ may well represent the first poetic response to the Revolution by a major writer and may have influenced Blok's "Dvenadcat'" ("The Twelve"), which was written six months after Remizov's work had been published. The sixteen-stanza piece, which was accompanied by nine striking drawings by S. Lebedeva, begins with the author-narrator rising from his grave, then describes in the third person, a hunched, faceless pilgrim wandering through Russia (second stanza), only to return to the authorial first person (sixth stanza) for the remainder of the work, thereby identifying the author-narrator with the pilgrim and creating a Christ-figure. Interrupting this lyric prologue are three short stanzas (third, fourth, and fifth) which are repeated verbatim once again as stanzas ten through twelve:

III.

Заря-заряница,
Красная девица,
Мать Пресвятая Богородица.

IV.

Ио, иа, цолк! Ио, иа, ио, цолк! Ио, иа, ио, цолк!
Пац, пац, пац, пац, пац, пац, пац, пац.

V.

Со святыми упокой, Христе,
души раб Своих . . .

(p. 73, 77-78)

The unusual juxtaposition of folk, onomatopoeic, and ecclesiastical rhythms immediately brings to mind and anticipates the unique texture of "Dvenad-

cat," with its colloquialisms, folk songs, and machine-gun fire. However, whereas Blok's Christ appears unexpectedly only at the conclusion of the poem, in Remizov's text Christian symbolism and Russian Orthodox refrains are employed consistently throughout and logically lead to the final stanza which refers both to Christ and to Mother Russia, and also echoes the author-narrator's lyric resurrection in the initial stanza:

XVI.

Смертию смерть поправ,
и сушим во гробех живот даровав.

(p. 80)

The two longest and logically central stanzas (seven and nine) were couched in rhythmic prose at first publication, but subsequently were reworked, together with stanzas thirteen and fourteen, into an eighty-line poem which was included under a new title, "Krasnyj zvon" ("The Red Pealing"), in a book of memoirs.³² Beginning with a eulogy to St. Petersburg highly reminiscent of the prologue in Puškin's "Mednyj vsadnik" ("The Bronze Horseman"), Remizov bemoans the desanctification of the city as the reason for destruction ("obezdolili, otreklis' ot apostola, imja svjatoe tvoe promenjali na čelovečeskoe . . . Vot počemu otstupili sily nebesnye," p. 75), and arrives at the dualistic conclusion that the city of Peter the Great (and the Christian faith of Peter the Apostle) are engulfed in the flame of Revolution:

Разбит камень Петров.
Камень огнем пыжнул.
И стоишь ты в огне — холодная Нева течет.³³

An apocalyptic vision of a silver belt in the sky studded with five new white suns, of a red rainbow containing two reddish-purple and two white suns, and of a crown (eighth stanza), precedes the poet's lyric appeal to crucified but unshakeable Mother Russia for comfort and salvation from the current turmoil. Then, after the repetition of the three refrains, the poet describes his soul-pain at the defilement of Russia (stanzas thirteen and fourteen), looks forward to her regeneration (symbolized by an icon-lamp), and appeals to his wise, counselling [soviet?] brothers ("brat'ja mudrye i sovetnye," p. 80) to decide his country's fate. Perhaps Remizov came to believe that the exceedingly rich and manifold Christian symbolism (the resurrected narrator, church refrains, wandering pilgrim, the star folk-symbol of Virgin Mary, the apocalyptic vision) tended to detract from the impact of suffering Mother Russia, for in the later blank verse version he deleted the first six stanzas and the repeated refrains (stanzas ten through twelve,

which would have been perceived as pale imitations nine years after "Dvenadcat'"), and began instead with the eulogy to St. Petersburg racked with revolution (originally stanza seven), followed by the declaration of his soul-pain (originally stanzas thirteen and fourteen), a description of Mother Russia gripped by woe and likened to crucified Christ (originally stanza nine), and finally ending with the poet's lyric appeal to his unshakeable homeland for comfort and salvation (originally part of stanza nine and given below in the 1927 version):

Родина моя просторная, терпеливая и безмолвная!
Прими верных, прими и отчаявшихся,
стойких и шатких,
бодрых и немощных,
прими кровных твоих
и пришлых к тебе,
всех — от мала до велика —
ты одна неколебимая!
из гари и смуты выведи
на вольный белый свет.³⁴

In March 1918 Remizov penned a second lyric response to the events of the preceding year, entitled "O sud'be ognennoj"³⁵ and inspired by Heraclitus' belief that change, guided by an intelligent law which he called *logos*, comprised the basic reality. For Remizov, however, the guiding force took the form of a deterministic fate (*sud'ba*) not at all resembling the chance fate so typical of his pre-Revolutionary prose works.³⁶ Through fate, power (*sila*) becomes law (*pravo*), and everything and everyone is subject to the judgment (*sud*) of the two cleansing brothers, fire (*ogon'*) and war (*vojna*). Power conquers chaos, creating law which rules the universe, only to be destroyed by fire and war so that a new life may arise. The abstract apotheosis of cleansing fire and inexorable fate, which comprises the first half of this work, abruptly gives way to a lyric second half where the author-narrator, with scorched heart, scales a fiery, rocky peak in search of God's help in finding a source of light. Directed to the waters of Mnemosyne, his sorrowful soul gains wisdom and departs from the body into eternal light and joy. Although the piece was couched in a rhythmic prose that utilized lines and stanzas arranged symmetrically around a vertical axis, the constant shifts in stress and syllable distribution precluded determination of an underlying metrical scheme.

Remizov's final poem, "Zenitnye zovy," totally lacked the sanguine faith in the cleansing fire of Revolution so graphically expressed in "O sud'be ognennoj." Instead it presents the poet's poignant appeal for salvation from

an indifferent fate and age. The poet languishes in darkness and desperately cries out for help:

Если что-то не подойдет,
не прикоснется рукой
к моему сердцу —
я пропал.
И в тяжелой вянущей тьме
как-будто беру я что-то —
хочу материнскую руку
прижать к сердцу.
И вижу, мохнатый паук там в высоте.³⁷

But the appeal evokes no response from a hostile fate and age, threateningly symbolized by a shaggy spider, iron raven, and iron stag, until the closing lines where the sought-for light of dawn assumes the form of a cross:

Я взываю из мрака:

«Железный олень,
могучими рогами к заре подыми,
брось,
расколоти тюленьи кости мои на куски.
Я духом моим опущусь
в водоворот глубины,
и по тонкой игле
взовьюсь к высоте.»

Молча олень подымает рога,
и зарею сверкает крест.
Ух! как ветер свистит в ушах.
Санки мчатся по ровной дороге —
волки — кони мои — вольно несут
к заре.

(lines 65-79)

Devastated by the forces of war and revolution, Remizov sought salvation in the Russian Orthodox faith, emigrating from Soviet Russia two years later. Reworked extensively before inclusion in Remizov's massive memoir on revolutionary Russia, "Zenitnye zovy" was divested of its underlying ternary (occasionally binary) meter and became a page-long prose fragment.³⁸

In retrospect we see that Remizov was never comfortable in working with poetic forms. His three published poems in a modernist vein were never reprinted, his experimentation with unrhymed, deformed meters on

Zyrian mythological themes were subsequently either discarded or reworked and incorporated into prose pieces, and three lyric mood poems remained unpublished. The significance of subject matter and lyric intensity of "Iuda predateł" prompted him to retain and reprint the piece in subsequent years as an appendix to his dramatic tragedy on the same theme. The cataclysmic Revolutions of 1917 and Civil War prompted him to return to verse as the highest form of elevated lyric intensity, but even then he vacillated between utilizing a rhythmic prose fragment and a poetic line with underlying meter, moving from prose to poetry in "Krasnoe znamja"/ "Krasnyj zvon," but from poetry to prose in "Zenitnye zovy." His major poetic work of the Revolutionary period, "O sud'be ognennoj," represented a compromise—written essentially in a nonmetrical prose, it sought to create the illusion of poetry through use of line, short stanza, and symmetric graphic distribution. Nevertheless, Remizov's experimentation with poetic forms and techniques reflected his lifelong preoccupation with the formal and auditory aspects of his prose, which utilized many secondary features usually associated with poetry (alliteration, repetition, parallelism, inversion) in making palpable the verbal texture of the printed word.

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NOTES

1. D. S. Mirsky, *Contemporary Russian Literature, 1881-1925* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), p. 281.
2. Patricia Carden, "Ornamentalism and Modernism," in *Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avant Garde, 1900-1930*, edited by George Gibian and H. W. Tjalsma (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), pp. 49-64.
3. Gleb Struve, *Russkaja literatura v izgnanii* (N'ju-Jork: Izdatel'stvo imeni Čexova, 1956), p. 259.
4. *TriQuarterly*, Nos. 27-28 (Spring-Fall 1973), pp. 10-51; reprinted as *The Bitter Air of Exile: Russian Writers in the West, 1922-1972*, edited by Simon Karlinsky and Alfred Appel, Jr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).
5. *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, No. 18 (Remizov, I. 1985) and No. 19 (Remizov, II. Forthcoming).
6. Marc Slonim, *Modern Russian Literature: From Chekhov to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 231.
7. Valerij Brjusov, *Dnevnik, 1891-1910* (Moskva: Izdanie M. S. Šabašnikovyx, 1927) (Rarity Reprints No. 28; Letchworth-Hertz-England: Bradda Books, 1972), pp. 122-123. Translated into English by Joan D. Grossman, *The Diary of Valery Bryusov (1893-1905)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980) pp. 129-131.
8. Published in the Moscow daily *Ku'er*, No. 248 (September 8, 1902), p. 3, with the subtitles "(Bördan Kylias). S zyrjanskogo" under the pseudonym N. Moldavanov. This was the earliest published work listed in Remizov's chronology of works included in his *Sočinenija*, Vol. 8 (SPB: Izdatel'stvo Sirin, 1910-1912), p. 301; but the list did not cite works excluded from

the collection. Andreev mentions the use of the pseudonym, but erroneously refers to the piece as a *rasskaz*, *Voprosy literatury*, No. 5 (1977), p. 218. A poem in dactylic tetrameter, "Grezy," had appeared more than a year earlier in *Žurnal dlja vsech*, No. 6 (June 1901), pp. 669-670, under the signature Aleksej R., but there is no evidence to date to indicate that the piece belonged to Remizov.

9. *Kur'er*, No. 262 (September 22, 1902), p. 3, under the pseudonym N. Moldavanov. The poem, apparently, was never reprinted.

10. *Ibid.* The poem, apparently, was not reprinted, although its text was set to music by Aleksej Arxangelskij and was published as a musical score: A. Remizov, *Mgla* (Moskva: Tip. K. N. Milevskogo, 1909), 8 p. Although the latter was recorded in *Knižnaja letopis'*, No. 37 (September 19, 1909), item 18407; the author has not been able to locate a fully extant copy. Pages 5-8 can be seen in GPB, f. 634, No. 18, listy 22-23, together with a manuscript copy of the same text in Remizov's own hand bearing the dedication "Trem sestram/ Nine, Vale i Sane Mordvinovym./ Muz. Alekseja Arxangelskogo./ Op. 4, No. 2. Melodeklamacija s orkestrom./ Pereloženie dlja piano" with the comment "Ėti stixi moi drevnie napisany v Vologde v 1902 g. v period družby s Iv. Pl. Kalčevym—on pisal stixi po nastojaščemu i mnogo poëtičeskix večerov proveli my v kefe moej . . ." (list 21). Enjambments of each sentence correspond to the later manuscript version, because the format of the published version was probably determined by the space of a newspaper column and not Remizov himself.

A second Remizov poem set to music by Arxangelskij was entitled "Romans dlja kontraŭto ili baritona" and bore the inscription "stixi usťsysofskie napis. v 1901 g." GPB, f. 634, No. 18, listy 17-18:

Беспокойные тучи, куда вы?
 Меня унесите, хочу жить, а здесь умираю.
 С каждым часом погост вырастает, —
 там думы мои засыпают.
 Длинные тучи по лунному небу плывут.
 Стойте же тучи!
 Укажите мне землю, где тяжесть спадает,
 разрешите . . .
 Уплыли молча, чуть слышно.
 Светятся тихо слезные звезды.
 Тени голых ветвей, как решетка.

The author is deeply grateful to the Saltykov-Ščedrin State Public Library in Leningrad for providing access to materials in the Remizov collection.

11. *Čortov log i polunoščnoe solnce. Rasskazy i poëmy* (S.-Petersburg: EOS, 1908), pp. 193-310.

12. *Sočinenija*, Vol. 2, pp. 149-202.

13. The pieces "Kladbišče," "Raduga," "Belaja noč," and "Ivan-Kupal" became segments number 7, 8, 10 and 11, respectively, of part 3 of "V plenu"; while "Kikimora" and "Plač devuški pered замуžestvom" were included in "Posolon," a collection of adapted folk materials, *Sočinenija*, Vol. 6, pp. 56, 68-69.

14. *Čortov log . . .*, pp. 264-265. The two incantations, apparently, were never reprinted.

15. The text provided in the article is that of first publication in the miscellany *Severnye cvety*; *Tretij almanax kn-va Skorpion* (Moskva 1903), p. 116. The six italicized words were deleted in *Čortov log . . .*, p. 251, as was the capitalization at the beginning of lines 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18 and 20.

16. The scansion provided adjacent to the text accounts for syllable differences in the first foot by anacrusis, which is not considered to be a deviation from the basic metrical pattern.

17. The four named pieces appeared together with "Plač devuški pered замуžestvom" and "Kikimora" under the general title "Polunoščnoe solnce" in *Severnye cvety assirijskie*, almanax 4 (Moskva: Skorpion, 1905), pp. 70-76. All six were included in part 2 of "Polunoščnoe solnce" in *Čortov log . . .*, pp. 252-261, 263, 268-269.

18. See Remizov's commentary in *Čortov log . . .*, pp. 313-315.

19. The author is deeply grateful to the Manuscript Division of the Lenin State Library in Moscow for providing access to Remizov's letters of February 8 and April 6, 1903, to Valerij Brjusov and the appended manuscripts of "Verenicy dnej," "Posle znoja želanij," "Severnye cvety," and "Preljudii." Fond 386, karton No. 100, ed. xr. 13, listy 8-16.

20. A manuscript of "Verenicy dnej" was mailed by Remizov from Vologda to Brjusov in Moscow with a cover letter dated February 8, 1903. *Ibid.*, listy 8, 11-12. A thirteen-line fragment of the poem in the Saltykov-Ščedrin State Public Library would indicate that the piece was set to music by Arxangelskij and may have been written two years earlier: "stixi usťsysofskie nap. v 1901 g." GPB, f. 634, No. 18, listy 14-16. In this version the first line "Zadumčivo tixo" is instruction to the singer, not the text, and *otkryla* is replaced by *raskryla* in line 8.

21. A manuscript of "Posle znoja želanij" was mailed together with that of "Verenicy dnej." GBL Otdel rukopisej, f. 386, k. 100, ed. xr. 13, listy 8-10.

22. A manuscript of "Preljudii" was mailed by Remizov to Brjusov with a cover letter dated April 6, 1903. *Ibid.*, listy 14-16.

23. *Zolotoe runo*, No. 4 (1906), pp. 42-43, with a parallel French text. The poem was captioned "S. R.," perhaps in dedication to his wife Serafima Remizova?

24. *Čortov log . . .* was listed in *Knižnaja letopis'*, No. 1 (January 5, 1908), item 276, under books registered between December 21, 1907, and January 1, 1908; *Sočinenija*, vol. 1, in No. 45 (November 20, 1910), item 25687 under books registered between November 11 and 18.

25. Consider, for example, the extensive alterations to his novel *Prud*, described by A. Shane in "Remizov's *Prud*: From Symbolism to Neorealism," *California Slavic Studies*, vol. 6 (1971), pp. 71-82.

26. In changing "Severnye cvety" from a twenty-line poem into an eight-sentence, eight-paragraph fragment, Remizov made a dozen textual changes and deletions, each of which contributed to disrupting the original dactylic beat.

27. As a goodnight poem to his daughter, "Nataše" sets the mood and provides a loose functional frame for the folktales and games that follow. The free verse dactylic metrical pattern is similar in principle and execution to that employed in "Severnye cvety." Written in 1902 and first published in the Jaroslavl newspaper *Severnyj kraj*, No. 118 (May 6, 1903), p. 12; the poem was reprinted in *Voprosy žizni*, No. 7 (1905), pp. 50-51; appeared in the first and second editions of *Posolon'* (Moskva: Zolotoe Runo, 1907 p. v, and *Sočinenija*, vol. 6 pp. 13-14); but was deleted from the sole émigré edition, *Posolon': Volšebnaja Rossija* (Pariž: Izdatel'stvo Tair, 1930). "Medvežja kolybefnaja pesnja" was first published in *Posolon'* (1907), p. 78; was reprinted in *Sočinenija*, vol. 6, p. 135; and again, with musical notes, in *Posolon'* (1930), p. 106.

28. Dated 1903 and first published in the miscellany *Vozdetye ruki* (Moskva: Oriflamma, 1908), pp. 6-21; "Iuda predatel" was included in *Čortov log . . .* as the third and final part of "Polunoščnoe solnce" (pp. 293-310) and reprinted twice thereafter as part of the commentary to Remizov's tragedy about Judas, Prince of Iscariot, in *Sočinenija*, vol. 8, pp. 273-283, and in *Tragedija o Iude prince iskariotskom* (Peterburg: Izdanie Teatrafnogo otdela Narodnogo kommissariata po prosvěščeniju, 1919), pp. 61-72.

29. Matthew 23: 13-33.

30. Lines 60-62. Essentially the same phrase is cited in Matthew 10: 39 and 16: 25, but Remizov's version introduces slight changes in word order, probably in order to achieve an iambic meter.

31. "Krasnoe znamja," *Argus*, No. 7 (July 1917), pp. 72-80. The illustration preceding the text on p. 72 displays a banner "Na krasnom pole," which also could be considered the piece's title.

32. A. Remizov, *Vzvizrennaja Rus'* (Pariž: Izd. Tair, 1927), pp. 51-54.

33. The last line was split in two, *xolodnaja* was replaced by *surovaja*, and the six lines about the desanctification of St. Petersburg were deleted in the 1927 version, "Krasnyj zvon."

34. *Vzvizrennaja Rus'*, p. 54.
35. The first part was published alone as a separate book in 1918 as *O sudbe ognennoj* (Petrograd: Artef xudožnikov Segodnja, n. d. [1918]) with the subtitle "predanie ot Geraklita Efesskogo"; then appeared twice, together with the second half, under the titles *Elektron* (Peterburg: Alkonost, 1919) and "O sudbe ognennoj; ot slov Geraklita" in *Ognennaja Rossija* (Revel: Izdatel'stvo Bibliofil, 1921), pp. 59-68; and finally was included without the second half in *Vzvizrennaja Rus'*, pp. 263-265.
36. A. Shane, "A Prisoner of Fate: Remizov's Short Fiction," *Russian Literature Triquarterly*, No. 4 (Fall 1972), pp. 308-309, 311, 315-316.
37. "Zenitnye zovy," *Zapiski mečtatelej*. No. 1 (1919), pp. 94-96, lines 1-9.
38. *Vzvizrennaja Rus'*, pp. 302-303.