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Because We Have No Time: *New Poetry in 1988*

Soviet Ukrainian culture could never complain of a dearth of poetry. Even in the darkest of times, hordes of new poets have sprung up, crowding the first thirty or forty pages of every "central" and "regional" literary journal with their more or less successful productions. During the fairly recent "period of stagnation," for example, some critics in the West, like Iwan Koszeliwe and Bohdan Boychuk, warned against the most serious danger of such poetic inflation: while the mediocre deafens and pushes out the accomplished, standards of judgment are in time dulled and eventually altogether obliterated.

In our exciting time of openness and reconstruction, the tremendous production of poetry has by no means decreased. No wonder that the young poet Oksana Zabuzhko thanks her stars that she is not an editor, and therefore is not condemned to read the stuff.¹ There is, however, a cardinal difference between, say, the early and the late 1980s. Although true excellence in poetry is always rare, today the enthusiastic, the innovative, the young pushes out and marginalizes the tired, the trite, the impotent. We see the individual face of a young poet not only in the obligatory photograph but also in the mirror of his text.

In order to shepherd the wealth of material facing me in this task, I have narrowed my frame to some articles and poems published last year in *Literaturna Ukraina* (*Literary Ukraine*), *Vitchyzna* (*Native Land*), *Zhovten* (*October*), and *Prapor* (*Banner*). I find the Lviv journal *Zhovten* to be the most vital and interesting when it comes to young poets; it does not shy away from moderately experimental texts, which is rare in Ukrainian literary periodicals even today. It is also there that the most daring comments on poetry are published. *Prapor* too features "centrally" unknown poets (it specializes in debuts), some of whom are mildly experimental. The trouble with that journal, however, is its "pocket" format and crowded page layout; the poetic text is squeezed in on all sides, so that reading it becomes downright uncomfortable. *Vitchyzna*, the central literary journal, publishes mainly the tried and true,

although it is quite generous to new poets—incomparably more so than are the Canadian or American literary journals of comparable stature. Its critical material, on the other hand, is relatively tame. The commanding literary weekly newspaper *Literaturna Ukraina*, being a kind of umbrella publication, offers a carefully balanced mix of the traditional and the new. As most of us know, its articles and reviews have now become indispensable.

The younger poets who saw their work published last year in the periodicals that I have examined count up to almost a hundred. At first glance, it seems difficult to keep track of their names. I counted two Ostapchuks and two Lazaruks, and at least three Shevchenkos. There is a Bazylevsky and a Mozolevsky, a Herasymchuk and a Herasymiuk and a Lytvyn and a Lytvynchuk, a Kremin and a Kameniuk. First names do not help much, because most of them seem to be either "Viktor" or "Valerii." If we were dealing here with the war poets or those of the 1950s, when everybody wrote like one man, the situation would be hopeless indeed. But, in the case of these new poets, we soon learn to orient ourselves in that deluge of names; as I have mentioned, their distinct features are reflected in their texts, and some of these "textual faces" are indeed unforgettable.

The younger poets of our time present a tremendous variety of styles, techniques, and thematic fields. One may even say that such a variety is almost too dizzying. This is especially evident in various critical texts—manifestos of sorts—where one direction seems to replace another almost as quickly as literary theories replace each other in the West. The young poet Natalka Bilotserkivets, for example, assures us that the young poets who made their debuts in the middle 1980s are now hopelessly antiquated, to be presently replaced by a "new wave."² One of the reasons for such a rapid turnover is particularly interesting: the moment of the reconstruction is a new *fiat*, and everything that happened between it and, say 1934, is almost literally antediluvian.

There is no need to dwell on the well-known fact that the daily life of the Soviet writer, who is a crucial cog in the ideological superstructure, is fairly rigidly organized. When a young beginner proves to be sufficiently "mature" to advance from the level of local readings and the "regional" press to that of "central" literary periodicals and national recognition, his role in the structure of his profession becomes sharply and unequivocally defined. He is then carefully monitored, and by more than a single pair of eyes—not only the obvious and rather visible eyes of the Communist party, but also the more insidious eyes of his older colleagues, to whom a strong presence in the upcoming ranks represents a much graver danger than the loss of a symbolic laurel wreath. In short, a strong young talent in the Soviet Union, as opposed to Canada or the United States, cannot complain of lack of attention.

Between, roughly, 1935 and 1955, the structure of the literary establishment was monolithically uniform. Almost as in the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth centuries, the aesthetics of sameness (to use Lotman's term, since it too implies both of these diverse periods) was the only possible approach to art. The beginner in Ukrainian poetry immediately after the war was

expected to write according to a single central model, established in lyrical poetry by Maksym Rylsky, Volodymyr Sosiura and the somewhat younger war poet—himself an epigone of the first two—Andrii Malyshko. Rylsky, doubtless, was a great poet, and even Sosiura had his moments. But as this model moved down in time, its epigones degenerated into the automatized, somehow hysterically frozen smiling of a Dmyterko, a Voronko, a Nekhoda, a Shvets, a Leonid Kulish, and countless others of that ilk. Literary criticism, let alone literary debate, became virtually impossible.

In the late 1950s, as a result of the "thaw," Lina Kostenko, Dmytro Pavlychko, and a small number of other prodigiously gifted poets introduced, cautiously enough, new and discordant notes into the droning monotone of the poetry of that time. As it always happens, soon afterward criticism stirred. Even something vaguely resembling a literary debate became evident, but it often cancelled itself out by ugly political slander. Things became much livelier when, in the early 1960s, the powerful talents of Ivan Drach, Vitalii Korotych, Mykola Vinhranovsky, Borys Necherda, and many lesser lights illuminated the poetic firmament. Most of them availed themselves of Ukrainian myths, folklore, and history to create fresh, electrifying poetry, often invoking their acknowledged predecessors—Tychyna, Svidzinsky, Antonych, and more distantly, Bazhan—and openly absorbing those scripts as elements of a startlingly new poetic utterance. (The talented and now apparently neglected Borys Necherda stands slightly apart from that tradition.) On the periphery of that community stood the great poet Vasyl Stus who had published very little in his lifetime, was subsequently purged, and died a martyr's death in the Perm gulag in 1985. It is his name, to be sure, that in time will become the emblem of his generation.

These poets were soon joined by somewhat younger talents. Born in the late 1930s and 1940s, Ihor Kalynets, Pavlo Movchan, Mykola Vorobiov, Vasyl Holoborodko, Vasyl Ruban, Hryhorii Kyrychenko, Hryhorii Chubai, and their peers take the spirit of the poetry of the 1960s much further along the road of poetic experiment, to the borders of surrealism on the one hand, and on the other, the loosely organized and relatively imageless free verse, known in American literature of the 1960s as "the poetry of statement." Because of the impending state terrorism of the following decade, these poets suffered greatly: Chubai died, Kalynets and Ruban spent years in the gulags, Vorobiov and Holoborodko were forcibly silenced and made their living as laborers. It is they, to a far greater extent than their slightly older colleagues, who have become the "gurus" of the youngest generation of poets—Vorobiov and Holoborodko in particular seem to enjoy the status of veritable cult figures.

As the wave of the 1960s grew in strength, authentic literary criticism, with its attendant encounter and dialogue, grew along with it. It somehow took on the hue of the poetry that it was discussing, thus forming with it a single unit, a single domain of discourse. The critics of the 1960s write masterfully crafted essays, somewhat elevated, declamatory in tone, favoring a stylized historical diction, and generously larded with highly poetic, often folkloristic, metaphors. They prefer broad ideological themes to a scrupulous scrutiny of a text, or to

technical discussions of the art of poetry. The work of Ivan Dziuba or Ievhen Sverstiuk, valuable as it is in itself, is a case in point.

The literary criticism of the 1980s, although not as accomplished, is much more "professional" both in tone and in intent. It has become, moreover, central in the literary process—a sort of emblem of the new *glasnost*. This is duly noted and bewailed by older poets who complain that the critics have become more important than the poets themselves. Such snide remarks lose much of their bite, however, when we consider that most of today's criticism, for all its "professionalism," is written by practising poets.

Many of the poets of the late 1980s hold advanced degrees in what is known in the Soviet Union as "philology," and one—very active in criticism—is an academic philosopher. The sweetly sentimentalist idea of the poet singing like a bird is completely foreign to them. Neither do they pose as demiurges, sending down gnominically oracular pronouncements in two-or-three-page notes, often not very much to the point—*any* point. Poetry has again become a lot of fun—fun to write and fun to write about, and fun to be as informed and "professional" about as one can, without the bad faith of "guarding its secrets from the profane."

Some of these poet-critics' formal education entails, in a number of cases, a more or less thorough familiarity with theory, especially Bakhtin and the Tartu and Moscow semiotics (a Muscovite told me in conversation that if you could not discuss Bakhtin with thorough familiarity in Moscow in the early 1980s, you were not fit for decent company.) There are rarely direct references to theoretical issues in their articles, and yet the theoretical subtext of many of them is immediately evident to the sympathetic eye.

It is impossible to describe here all the numerous and intricate concerns of these young poet-critics; let me merely trace a general outline of their interests. One that stands out most prominently is the unqualified demand for high artistry in Ukrainian poetry. There are impressive attempts to forge a system of evaluative criteria which would orient the poets themselves, their readers, and perhaps most important, the editors of literary journals. We repeatedly hear merciless castigations of "graphomaniacs" and even, on occasion, middle-level talents. As everything else in the discourse of *glasnost*, such imperatives frequently are too impatient and, moreover, themselves badly disoriented. Our young enthusiasts seem to forget that a system of evaluative criteria cannot be forged overnight as a response to sudden changes in the political climate of the land. In themselves elusive to the point of transparency, such criteria are developed over decades—indeed, over centuries—of cultivation, against the background of a solidly grounded and uninterrupted literary process. The tragically truncated development of Ukrainian literature, in which all sorts of demands (often at the point of a gun) pulled the idea of literature in all sorts of directions, cannot be expected to generate the perception and "instinctive" recognition of excellence according to systematic criteria, although this in itself does not prevent Ukrainian poets from producing excellent poems. We see this, for example, in the fact that a single selection of poems by a single author in a journal carries accomplished texts side by side with mediocre production.

Another example is the aforementioned overabundance of published poetry. The hypothesis of a "movable aesthetics," which some young critics have been advocating, although quite vague in itself, seems to promise a useful resolution to their dilemma. Close (as far as I understand it) to Sartre's "situational aesthetics," it negates outright the value of "eternal" criteria, thus not only adapting itself to the specific restless situation of reconstruction but moving right into the aesthetic theories of Western postmodernism.

Another important concern of the new poet-critics can be summed up by Ezra Pound's once notorious slogan, "Make it new!" Mykola Riabchuk, an excellent and vocal critic, who made his name in the late 1970s, writes:

New books of poetry, not always perfect but decidedly experimental, by their very appearance awaken though, disturb the moribund, stagnant surface of literary "decency," and pose a serious threat to those who for decades masked their own banality and mediocrity by the empty slogans of traditionalism, of loyalty to classical traditions.³

Hand in hand with this concern goes the question of the provincialism of Ukrainian poetry. The younger critics speak surprisingly little of the Russian "center." They seem to realize that such comparisons represent a symptom of a colonized culture—a flunkey nation which has not raised its consciousness from the grubbing level of a slave; suffering from a bad case of reaction formation, it wants to please the master by playfully competing with him, as a little boy, currying favor, pretends to compete with his father. The mere presence of the Russian culture looming over the border has been hypnotizing Ukrainians ever since the eighteenth century. That shadow, by itself, has paralyzed artistic freedom, even in those rare times when the police did not actually intervene. Who among the Polish, or Czech, or Hungarian writers worries what the Russians, in their *Literaturnaia gazeta*, might think of his work? It is plain that these intellectuals are afraid of the Russian power only as brute force, openly exhibiting that fear to the world, and thus precisely defining imperialist terrorism. This, of course, makes it that much easier for them to love the work of a Tjutchev, a Blok, or a Mandelstam, because they can embrace such texts in the freedom of an equal. So long as the paralyzing cobra stare—the stare of that Other which resides in the soul of a Soviet Ukrainian—is not overcome and banished, the Ukrainian spirit will never be free to encounter Russian culture as a *vis-à-vis*, without a trace of guilt.

Be that as it may, the poet-critics of the 1980s are after bigger and potentially more healthful game than impressing their neighbor. Les Herasymchuk seems to speak for many when he writes in *Prapor* that to view Ukrainian poetry in the context of world culture has now become imperative.⁴ A lively argument has been going on about that. The 29 year-old poet-critic and professional philosopher Oksana Zabuzhko thinks that one must first examine contemporary Ukrainian poetry against the background of the Ukrainian national culture as such, and worry about the West later.⁵ The somewhat older experimental poet Valerii Illia warns that free verse, for example, should not be

adopted directly from the West but should be adapted to native Ukrainian traditions.⁶

In Ukrainian literature such debates are not new. What *is* new is the approach that the younger critics take to this "eternal question," against the background of the specific configuration not only of *glasnost* but of some unexpected tendencies in the West. I have in mind theories of the neo-Marxists, like Frederick Jameson or Edward Said, bearing on a redefinition of nationalism and national literatures in view of the third-world nations, which are desperately attempting to excavate their identities from layers upon layers of alien cultural sedimentation, deposited by their imperialist oppressors.

The main thrust of these literary polemics is directed toward the question (obviously linked with the problems discussed above) of the "eternal" bifurcation of the aesthetic and social functions of poetry. This again parallels similar concerns which of late have resurfaced in the West. No doubt basing herself on Lotman, Liudmyla Taran points out that poetry not only differs from, but opposes, daily activity. If we misunderstand this, we misunderstand Marx's dialectical relationship between being and consciousness and, more important, the dialectical relationship between poetic and ordinary language. In short, those who impose on poetry tasks that other spheres of human activity are meant to perform, are "idealists" who oppose the principles of Marxian dialectics.⁷ The general consensus seems to hold that the idea of the poem is disseminated not only in the content but also in the material of the form which finally proves to be one and the same; hence the ideology of the poem is defined primarily by its high degree of artistry.⁸

It obviously follows that these critics must redefine the role of the reader. And indeed, they redefine it in direct opposition to the customary Soviet conception of the reader as a passive receiver of the message; they call for a reader who is intellectually and psychologically prepared to actively enter the poetic text. Vasyly Ivashkiv, for example, holds that the reader is co-creator of the text, capable of transforming it according to his own view on the world.⁹

Those young critics who choose to defend the social function of poetry directly, also do so in unexpected ways. The most frequent line of defense involves the principle of *glasnost*. "Philological" poets, the argument goes, miss a myriad of magnificent opportunities that the new era offers. Among the most pressing is the possibility to expand the readership of Ukrainian poetry, and thus to ensure the health of the Ukrainian language itself. "Philological" poets, as the somewhat older poet-critic Volodymyr Bazylevsky argues, should finally realize that nobody in the cities will read them, and nobody in the villages will understand them.¹⁰ (It is interesting and symptomatic of the "creative chaos" of these debates that Bazylevsky's own poetry is highly intellectual, featuring complex stanzaic forms and is partial to intertextual allusions, which only well-prepared readers are able to enjoy.)

Although they fully realize the obvious dangers that not only Ukrainian poetry but the Ukrainian language itself faces today, the "philological" poets are afraid that the baby might be thrown out with the water. Ihor Rymaruk—one of the most gifted, and indeed the most complex poets of the 1980s—

expresses the fear that when poets begin to descend to the level of the mass reader, journalism will dominate poetry, and thought will enter it as cliché, lowering itself to the musings of a schoolboy.¹¹ And Mykola Riabchuk writes that whenever he sees a sentence beginning with the ritualistic formula "At this time of...", he becomes apprehensive. It used to be "at this time of industrialization," "at this time of collectivization," etc. Now it is "at this time of democratization." When such a ritualistic phrase precedes a discussion of poetry, all questions of a poet's artistic worth are automatically neutralized, and professional standards become impossible.¹²

With the full complexity of this situation in mind (at least to the degree that we can perceive it from our standpoint), we cannot help sympathizing with the view of the "philologists." It is quite dangerous to assign tasks to the poet, no matter how noble their motivation—the history of Ukrainian literature should have taught us as much. Only when the poet is allowed to work at the highest level possible for him and for him alone, will he contribute to the salvation and growth of the Ukrainian language; as every dictator knows, a high level of culture is by itself of great political importance. Finally, when critics push the responsibility of social criticism onto the poets (even if these critics are themselves poets)—thus engaging in prescriptive, rather than descriptive criticism—they actually evade their own responsibility. Using the poetic texts as (what Jameson calls) the "political unconscious," critics should catalyze the latent political substratum of the text and bring it to the surface, thus co-creating with the poet, as every gifted reader is expected to do.

There is a kind of poetry that the new poet-critics are fully justified in attacking. They attack it, moreover, in ways similar to those of Jameson (although on a much more rudimentary level), making not only the content but also the form the bearer of pernicious meaning. I have in mind the work of the war poets who were mentioned in the beginning of this article, together with their numerous contemporary epigones. For example, the critics revel in making long lists of the clichés which those older poets and their progeny consider to be metaphors. The lyrical hero wants to become a little ear of wheat; the day always rings like a bell; the hammer and sickle lead mankind to truth, goodness, and happiness; the truths of Illich bring mankind to its ultimate aim.¹³ Leonid Kulish, a celebrated war poet and a decorated war hero, recently published a collection of poetry; some young critics took this modest book as a paradigm of what is wrong with his generation, trying to outdo each other in ridiculing his production.¹⁴

These young poet-critics' ultimate verdict against that kind of poetry is that it is insidiously dishonest not only toward society but also toward language and literature. Weaving together clichés in sing-song stanzas, the older poets and their followers have attempted to prettify the ugly realities of the late 1940s and beyond. One critic aptly compares such misuses of the poetic word with the notorious "Potemkin villages."¹⁵

What is much more surprising is the unfriendliness that some of the new poet-critics occasionally show toward the "central" poets of the 1960s, who are generally considered to be their forerunners. Our surprise, of course, is

mitigated by the fact that here we have to do with the younger generation clearing the ground for the construction of their own settlements, since these attacks are never conducted along political lines. Riabchuk, for example, writes, "The intoxicating thrust into the future which bewinged the poetry of the 1960s with romantic imagery and fiery maximalist slogans, mouthed by a collective and generalized hero, is being tested and found wanting by the new situation."¹⁶ "Is it such a sin for our young poets," he asks in another place, "not to write like Drach, or Symonenko, or Lina Kostenko, or Borys Oliynyk, or Vinhranovsky, as some critics of the young poets would want them to do?" Under the great, officially canonized "ikonostases," such critics long to build identical, only somewhat smaller, "ikonostases."¹⁷ And Viktor Ostapchuk points out that the free verse of the young will sorely disappoint those readers who got used to the kind of poetry that is read aloud, from the stage.¹⁸ To be sure, a number of the poets who flourished in the 1960s, now have changed or modified their styles; a case in point is the dramatic and very interesting metamorphosis of Vasyl Holoborodko, or Ivan Drach's somewhat less abrupt and milder modulations of pitch.

The poetry of the later 1980s is indeed quite different from the work of the "central" poets of the middle 1960s. More precisely, the new poets successfully avoid the traps that their prodigiously talented older colleagues have set up for themselves. Gone is the romantic striving mentioned by Riabchuk, and the declamatory, stagy quality mentioned by Ostapchuk. Gone, one might add, are those poets' showy folk stylizations (à la Narbut in graphics); their occasional mannered, and to me particularly irritating, infantilism (à la Tychyna who, somehow, got away with it); the brass notes of an almost embarrassing pathos, frequently coupled with rhetorical, and strictly decorative, hyperbolism; an open flirtation with the reader, frequently expressed in a messy, saccharine voice. Generally speaking, much of the poetry of the late 1980s is the first instance in the history of Ukrainian literature of a concerted rebellion against the spirit of romanticism which, explicitly or implicitly, has attended Ukrainian poetry since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

One must be careful not to overgeneralize this point for the simple reason that the variety of styles in contemporary Ukrainian poetry is staggering. I will now outline only two tendencies in this wide array which seem to me to be the most representative. Their radical opposition to each other, moreover, should give us an idea of the extraordinarily broad spectrum of poetic discourse in the Ukrainian literature of our day. I should warn, however, that a single poet (Henadii Moroz, for instance) can work in both of these directions.

The first style is that of the aforementioned "philological poets," as their opponents call them, or what I would prefer to call the neosymbolists. Ihor Rymaruk, Vasyl Herasymiuk, Iurii Buriak, Hennadii Moroz, Mykhailo Kameniuk, Dmytro Kremin, in spite of the various and great differences among them, seem to represent the mainstay of that direction. They write in seemingly conventional stanzas, but they often explode them from within, in the manner, say, of James Merrill or the early Ted Hughes. They favor rhyme, but their rhymes are, on the whole, daringly experimental and complex. Their lines are

dense sonic and verbal textures, frequently with foregrounded consonantal alliteration. Openly, even flagrantly literary (indeed, "philological"), they are obviously in love with the Ukrainian language, searching out old words or rare dialectal expressions, and constructing unusual syntactical patterns. They indulge in various forms of wordplay and in intertextual allusions, often wittily masked. Their poems are thick tapestries of metaphors, which sometimes echo distant, unspecified myths. These metaphors are organized elliptically to create a quasi-hermetic effect, although they almost always reflect extrinsic significations.

To illustrate this type of poetry, I will quote a poem by Rymaruk with an obviously political theme: a purged and exiled poet dreams of returning home, while his successful and carefree younger colleagues back home are destroying the traditions for which he has suffered:

Starym obrusom stolu ne zastelym—
pomyslymo... i spalym, pered tym
protsytuvavshy holosom veselym,
shcho navit' dym solodkyi, navit' dym.

I dohoryt'. I zakortyt' idylli.
I toi, u koho shche khoda tvrda,
maine do zhinky u sorochtsi bili,
do zhinky, movchaznoi, iak voda.

A tam, potoibich dymu bezimennia,
khtos' katulaie cherez kalamut'.
Tak dobuyaiut' dushu—ne proshchennia,
tak nohy obmorozheni idut'!..

Nemov ioho chekaiut' na vesilli,
nemov luna hude na trysta sil,
i svichnyky, na pisniu zdalenili,
shche zalyvaiut' voskom holyi stil.¹⁹

[We shall not cover the table with the old tablecloth. We shall deliberate... and burn it, quoting beforehand in a merry voice that even the smoke is sweet, even the smoke. / And it will burn up. And we shall want some idylls. And the one who still can walk steadily, will steal away to a woman in a white shirt—a woman as silent as water. / But there, beyond the smoke's namelessness, someone is dragging his feet through the mud. Thus they extract the soul, and not forgiveness. Thus his frostbitten feet walk! / It is as if they were waiting for him at a wedding, as if the happy echo thundered through three hundred villages. And the candleholders, now too distant for song, still drip wax upon the bare table.]²⁰

The effectiveness of this stunning poem is obviously enhanced by its understated mythical atmosphere and equally subtle intertextuality, playfully introduced by the phrase "quoting in a merry voice." The allusion is, of course, to the *Odyssey*—the famous image of the sweet smoke of Odysseus' Ithaca. It follows that the "we" in the poem may be read as Penelope's wanton grooms, usurping the city of poetry, and the woman, "as silent as water," as Penelope

herself—a mysterious, elusive Ukrainian Muse. The theme of the poem, moreover, is supported by a secondary allusion; I have in mind passages in several poems from the 1920s, whose authors were eventually purged, in which the image of the smoke of Ithaca is inscribed.²¹

The following poem by Mykola Miroschnychenko is an example of rather bold verbal and sonic experimentation, vaguely reminiscent of similar experiments by Marina Tsvetaeva and Emma Andiiivska. Notice, however, that even in this case the poet refuses to abandon extrinsically coded meaning: the poem is about a woman who is also a tree.

Daryvo soniachne,
 derevo sunychne,
 sokom zvysochene,
 trykol'orosynychne!
 Shchedroiu rodistiu
 rid proholoshui,
 stan' meni radistiu,
 shcho pryholomshuie...
 Skoro skory mene
 vittiam i korenem,
 shche i uiaskry mene
 karymy koramy.
 Budem dva dereva
 sokom zvysocheni,
 budem dva daryva
 rozloho-soniachni.²²

A prose translation of this poem would be completely worthless; the complex punning on the word "trykol'orosynychne" alone would take a paragraph of variants ("tricolored dew," "tricolored bluebird," etc.), while the two meanings of the word "zvysocheni" ("heightened" and "glorified")—equally valid as epithets for trees—would also require commentary.

Directly opposed to this kind of intensified poetry is a sort of "antipoetry," which I would prefer to call by the term popular among American poets in the late 1960s—"the poetry of statement." This kind of poetry is written mostly by quite young authors, in their twenties or early thirties, although we already find it in the work of some poets of the late 1960s, especially Vasyl Ruban, the later works of Ihor Kalynets and Mykola Kholodnyi. The most visible among them are Oleksandr Hrytsenko, Viktor Neborak, Oleksandr Irvanets, Ivan Malkovych, Ivan Malenky, and Natalka Bilotserkivets, who is also their most vocal "theorist." This is an extremely active and productive group, and most of the youngest poets, who have made their debuts in the national periodicals in 1988, seem to be eager to join it. These poets are also the most vociferous, developing their credos in erudite articles which, for all their erudition, read like good old-fashioned manifestoes.

Much like the "poets of statement," and some of today's postmodernist poets in the West, these young Ukrainians cultivate themes of daily life, seemingly

insignificant incidents, fleeting emotions. Theirs is a deliberately limited, personal world, scrupulously deprived of any "poeticalness" on the one hand, and, on the other, of any grand political or historical themes. It is only by the slightest, barely perceptible movements that a deeper significance is implied. They avoid ostentatious imagery; occasionally, a single delicate metaphor, frequently in the closure of the text, suddenly breaks the illusion of mundane reality, and vaguely intimates other, often mythical realms.

The signature of poetry in these texts is carried by their tone, syntax, and diction. The tone is calmly narrative, sketching the image of speech. "Low," everyday words constitute the body of the diction. And yet the poet, predominantly by a subtle manipulation of syntax, strives to create an atmosphere of wonder—the mystery of everyday words, events, objects. The control here must be absolute, otherwise the effect might be lost, and we might be lost, and we might be left with a paragraph or two of worthless prose. The poem, nevertheless, should never create an impression of monumentality and indispensability; very loosely framed, it should imply an effect of inconsequentiality—a moment of language, to be fleetingly experienced and then left behind, but hopefully not forgotten.

Although such poetry, both in Ukraine and in the West, is mainly written in free verse, Ukrainian poets sometimes employ meter, and even rhyme. The game, however, is to use such formal devices as informally and loosely as possible, almost to the point of parody (a technique perfected in modern Polish poetry). All traces of "philological" virtuosity are to be avoided; the effect must be that of haphazardness, often bordering on sing-song.

The following is an interesting poem by Klavdiia Koretska, slightly reminiscent of Patrytsiia Kylyna or the early Holoborodko, but more contemporary than they in its refusal of any kind of "poeticalness:"

Baba moia Oleksandra
 sydyt' bilia zapichka—
 do nei tuliat'sia puzati horniata,
 i makitra hlynianym slukhom
 lovyt' babyni mysli.
 A babyni mysli ta vse pro robotu:
 "Treba kartopliu spoloty,
 podoity korovu
 i trokhy soniashnyku povernuty holovu,
 bo vin ne vstyhaie za sontsem."
 Ia stoiu bilia pechi
 i tak meni svitlo,
 niby sydyt' na lavi
 ne baba, a pryzakhidne sontse.²³

[My grandmother Oleksandra sits close by the stove. Roundbellied little pots snuggle up to her, and the large clay bowl, with its earthen hearing, receives grandma's thoughts. And grandma's thoughts are always about work: "The potatoes have to be weeded, the cow has to be milked, and the sunflower's

head has to be turned a bit, because it just isn't catching up with the sun." I stand by the stove, and everything is so bright, like it's not grandmother sitting on the bench, but the setting sun.]

Grandmother's first name grounds her, imbuing her with immediate actuality. The name itself (or rather, its full version), however, is not typical for a peasant woman—"Lesia" would be more common. Hence, as early as the first line, we have the effect of simultaneous immediacy and subtle alienation. This effect of grounding-with-alienation is strengthened by the implication that a common clay mixing bowl is a strange radar dish which, moreover, is equipped to receive thoughts. But it is in the list of the prosaic agricultural tasks which grandmother has to perform that we feel the full impact of mythical alienation (the effect of its near-imperceptibility is achieved by the evenness of the narrative voice): grandmother must turn the head of the sunflower a little, because it cannot catch up with the sun. Suddenly, and almost imperceptibly, the peasant woman becomes a mythical figure—perhaps the earthmother or the sunwife—and the blending of her vast figure with the setting sun in the closure is now merely a consequence of what has gone before. It is, of course, the prosaic context, embodied in the even, "spoken" narrative tone, that makes the woman's epiphany that much more *authentically* poetic.

And here are two stanzas from a poem by Viktor Neborak, in a startlingly different key, but still within the field of the "poetry of statement":

I dzhynsy nosytymu do dirok,
i karkatymu na mody novitni.
Ia budu, pevno, ostannim na sviti,
khto znatyme, shcho take spravzhnii "rok."
.....

Spysavshy virshiv os' takennyi stos,
za memuary viz'mus' potrokhu.
V nykh voskreshu ia nashu epokhu!
(Iakshcho mene ne vkhopyt' skleroz.)²⁴

[I'll wear my jeans thredbare, and I'll grumble against new fashions. I'm sure that I'll be the last man on earth who knows what real "rock" is. / I'll write a pile of poems this high, and later I'll start thinking about my memoirs. In them I'll resurrect our epoch! (That is, if sclerosis doesn't get me first.)]

As the two examples show, within the general domain of the "poetry of statement," there are numerous and interesting "subdivisions"—from the playfully satirical Viktor Neborak and the somewhat more darkly sarcastic Oleksandr Hrytsenko to the intensely lyrical Ivan Malkovych. The borderlines of these "subdivisions" run in various directions. A very important boundary, illustrated by my two examples, lies between the "city poets" and the "country poets." The "country poets" do not necessarily write for the village reader, as Bazylevsky advises poets to do in a passage quoted earlier. Many of them, like Klavdiia Koretska, use the village idiom and folkloristic themes for quite complex and subtle artistic purposes. Natalka Bilotserkivets, who is the advocate of the "city poets," has not missed this; she lumps such "country poets" together

with the "philological" neosymbolists like Rymaruk, labeling all of them elitist poets who—for all their obvious talent and the important place that they occupy in the literary process—are rapidly losing readers not only of their own poetry but, more indirectly, of new Ukrainian poetry as a whole.²⁵

There are, indeed, a number of Ukrainian postmodernist poets who attempt to write directly for the young city dweller, using his own language, including slang. Oleksandr Hrytsenko, for instance, does this, and advises others to do it too. Here is an excerpt from his poem "*Movoznavstvo*" (Linguistics):

A khloptsi hotsaiut' do rannia
pid bezdukhovnyi "modern toking"
nachkhaty im na isnuvannia
Antonychevykh strof vysokykh
a mozhe druzhe razyk zvazhysh
svoiu literaturnu hordist'
a mozhe ty ishche rozmazhesh
sl'ozu rozchulennia po mordi
poeziiu shchonaivysoku
zvidkil' cherpaty iak ne z toho
nema'ovnychoho potoku
zanutnenoho ta zhyvoho
vid "Slova" azh do Vorobiova
vid tekhnstruktsii do matu
i pozychaiesh tuiu movu
*v svoiu chudovu prebhatu*²⁶

[And the guys hoof and stomp 'til the cows come home to the soulless "modern talking" not giving a damn about the existence of Antonych's high verses/and maybe buddy you'll want to consider for a bit your literary pride and maybe you'll yet smear a tear of sentiment all over your mug/from where can we ladle up the very highest poetry if not from this unpicturesque brook muddied and yet alive / from the "Word" (of Ihor's Campaign) all the way to Vorobiov form tech-specs to screw-you *and you borrow this language and put it into your own so beautiful and rich.*]

Natalka Bilotserkivets calls such poetry "rock poetry," and interestingly points out that it fulfills for the city dweller the same needs as folkloristic-sentimental poetry does, or used to do, for the village reader.²⁷ Be that as it may, the fact remains that popular culture—an obviously powerful ideological tool—comes to Ukraine via Moscow, in the Russian language. For a long time, the center prevented the Ukrainian periphery from developing its urban culture; it seems that now this lack is about to be remedied.

An exciting result of such attempts is the rapidly growing phenomenon of the Ukrainian "bard"—a poet who sings or chants his verses, accompanying himself on the guitar. Panchyshyn, Chubai (Hryhorii's son), Morozov, and Oleh Pokalchuk are the most prominent among them. I am particularly fond of Andrii Panchyshyn's work, because it is imbued with the spirit of the pre-war

Lviv, liberally using its idiom and patois, and often sounding like the light verse of our own Babai.

Although I follow the growth of the new "poets of statement" with great interest, I see a serious danger threatening them. In the West, particularly in the United States, the *pretended* naiveté of such poetry is really an *image*, or a *game*, of naiveté and simplicity. Such poetry is indeed a "supersophisticated" affair, based on a long tradition, beginning with Whitman, through William Carlos Williams, and ending with such deceptively simple, and yet extremely complex, poets as John Ashbery. And perhaps most important, the tradition opposite theirs—that of intensely "poetical" (or "philological") poetry like Wallace Stevens' or, in our day, James Merrill's—acts as its dialectical Negative, reinforcing it through the tension of opposition. The younger Ukrainian poets do not always observe such complex mediations, which they could easily find in their own literature. They go directly from what they learned in their literature classes into attempting to transcribe the voices of their grandfathers, or, for that matter, their own. As a result, some of them fall into the trap that the nature of the "poetry of statement" sets up for the unwary: what we get is indeed a piece of socialist-realist prose, with a moralizing closure, haphazardly slapped on. I must repeat, however, that the best of that work is indeed excellent.

One of the reasons for the frequent slips of artistic judgment within the field of the "poetry of statement" is the result of a phenomenon that is in itself laudable—the aforementioned all-out war against the "Potemkin villages" of the inauthentic language in the production of the war poets and their numerous imitators. Liudmyla Taran makes this quite plain:

Young poets deliberately insult the poetical pose, the drumroll, the loud rhetoric... They attack all prettifying devices, all declamatory gestures, all artifice. Young poets deliberately wish to incorporate ever new levels of life, of the everyday, of everything that is small and unnoticeable. They want to turn this into the fact of poetry.²⁸

And Riabchuk wrote somewhat earlier: "In this we see the opposition of the earthy "substantiality," the full-blooded concreteness of life, to language at a second remove, conditional language which we have learned to read as falseness, as *Erzatz* [erzatsnist in the original]."²⁹

Although the critics' objections are in themselves healthful, their tone of urgency might be misunderstood by young enthusiasts as a call for the *immediate* (unmediated infusion of ideology into poetic texts. The wounds that *glasnost* has exposed hurt so much (and the pain must be told immediately), the mistrust that has been unleashed is so deep (and must be expressed at this very moment, before it is too late) that some young poets consider the mediation of art *as such* to be in bad faith. And this, of course, threatens to bring their poetry, full circle, back to the raw ideological "statement."

The pain and the mistrust is indeed felt everywhere in the poetry of the young—not only in the work of the "poets of statement" but also in that of the most disciplined and "philological" of the neosymbolists. As these poets

themselves admit, their view on the world has little of the youthful enthusiasm and the resolute faith in the future that we saw in the poets of the 1960s; it cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be regarded as hymning the new age of openness and reconstruction.

Even the most intimate poems are frequently darkened by the shadow of anxiety. Here is a stanza from a poem by the talented Iurii Andrukhovych about taking a walk with his little daughter:

I tse smerkannia—lahidne i hlyboke...
 Vona bizhyt', i ii chotyry roky.
 I ia uslid ii tiahnusia rukoiu,
 i chym ia zasloniu, i iak zahoiu?..³⁰

[And this twilight is gentle and deep.. She is running, and she is four. And I reach after her with my hand, and with what will I shield her, and how will I heal her?]

Small wonder that in such an emotional climate poets choose themes of introspection, questioning, and doubt. In intimate lyrical poems, motifs implying absence, lack, emptiness, the wasteland occur with astonishing frequency. Let me quote some lines from Viktor Ostapchuk's moving poem "*Akvarel' z chervonymy chovnamy*" (Watercolor with Red Boats):

Na bezbarvnomu vitri nimiiut' pokynuti hnizda.
 Na zalznomu vitri tripochut' doshchi zapiznili.
 Vidplyvaiut' chervoni chovny do bezbozhnoho mista.
 U znevirenu zemliu liahaiut' plody perezrili.

 Vidplyvaiut' chervoni chovny, zalyshaiuchy pustku.³¹

[In the colorless wind the abandoned nests become silent. In the iron wind the belated rains flutter. The red boats are leaving for a godless city. Overripe fruit falls into the desperate soil.... The red boats are leaving, abandoning the desolate homestead.]

In an almost relentless sequence of parallel phrases, the elegiac sadness beats like a tidal wave, intensifying our sense of loss and emptiness.

Black humor, satire, sarcasm must serve as a shield, if not as a cure. Anatolii Kychynsky, for example, wrote a powerful poem "*Avtoportret u protyhazi*" (Self-portrait in a Gas Mask). At a masked ball—obviously a re-embodiment of the Gothic topos of the orgy before collective perdition, usually from the plague—not only do the guests wear masks (which is an element of the topos itself), but they wear gas masks. We soon realize that the function of the gas masks is not only to protect the guests for a moment longer from the killing air, but—and this is more important—to protect them from each other, from the murderous atmosphere of each other's hypocrisy and ill will. "And what about me?" the lyrical hero asks at the end of the poem. "Well, I too am wearing a gas mask. It is, after, a *total* masquerade: it is not safe to be different. And finally, is it not safer to mask my face not only from others but from my own self?"³²

Such apocalyptic themes are often linked with the tragedy of Chernobyl. The poet Bohdan Stelmakh, who had made his debut in the late 1960s, wrote a satirical poem about an old potter, significantly named Pygmalion, who suddenly decides to fashion a row of nuclear reactors out of clay, instead of his usual supply of pots and clay toys, and to exhibit them in the marketplace. Little wonder that his wife, named Galatea, is somewhat disturbed by this decision (her name implying that she knows what her husband can do when he puts his mind to it):

"Shchos' ty, Pihmalione, nache s'ohodni ne teie..."

"Teie s'ohodni ia, teie, liuba moia Halateie."

.....

Vynesla zhinka diad'kovi termos borshchu na bazar.

Bachyt'—stoit', ne kupuiet'sia atomnyi diad'kiv tovar.

"Shchos' ty s'ohodni ne teie, liubyi Pihmalione,

Lipshe lipyv by dali horshchyky pid vazony.

"Liuba moia Halateie, horshchyky—shtuka nekhytra.

Ni soloveiko, ni pivnyk, ni baranets', ni makitra.

Shtuka—take, shcho i ne svysne i maku v niomu ne vtresh,

A ie!—movchyt' i nahaduie, shcho ty z ioho lasky zhyvesh."³³

["Not feeling too good today, are you, Pygmalion..." "I'm alright today, quite alright, my dear Galatea. "... The wife brought to the market a thermos of borshch for her old man. She sees that his nuclear ware is standing, not selling at all. "Not feeling too good today, are you, Pygmalion? You'd be better off making flower pots, as before." "My dear Galatea, flower pots are a piece of cake. So is a bird whistle, a clay rooster, a clay ram, or a mixing bowl. The trick is to make something which does not whistle, and in which you can't pound seed, but which is!—silently reminding you that you live by its grace."]

The theme of the tragedy of Chernobyl is often expanded to embrace problems of ecology. This, in turn, provides poets with the opportunity to attack technology, or, more precisely, the cold indifference of the technological age. Oksana Pakhlovska writes:

Vzhe Dzhotto—ne khudozhnyk, a sputnyk.

Vzhe navit' des' kompiuter—dryhent.

I z kozhnym dnem vse lehshe nam zabuty
ostanni z naiprekrasnishykh lehend.

.....

Vse myhotyt'. Vs'omu nemaie liku.

A nebo znovu tykhe na zori.

I my—poety atomnoho viku—
ostanni trubadury na zemli.³⁴

[Now Giotto is not an artist but a sputnik. Now somewhere even a computer is an orchestra conductor. And with each day we forget more and more easily the last of the most beautiful legends.... \ Everything shimmers. There is too much

of everything. Only the sky is once again silent at dawn. And we—poets of the atomic age—are the last troubadours on earth.]

Although technology itself is frequently thus criticized—in a romantic, if not a sentimentalist, spirit—technological terms are utilized again and again in metaphors, to make poetic texts sound more contemporary, more in touch with the surrounding actuality. I for one find the provincial naiveté of such use of "hardware" extremely annoying, particularly when the author attempts to combine it metaphorically with lyrical, emotional motifs. Although such practice is distantly reminiscent of the English "metaphysical" poets, it does not work in our time: as the young Ukrainian poets, in other instances, themselves show, we have lost the innocent Baroque fascination with matters of "physics."

As is to be expected, the poets devote much attention to *glasnost* and *perestroika*. But, contrary to the enthusiasm that we find daily in political and literary articles, the poets are more critical than enthusiastic; to put it more precisely, they reveal extreme caution, and a profound scepticism. Occasionally, they approach the infernally complex questions of the new openness in a very humdrum, routine manner, much as their elders approached social problems forty years ago. One becomes tired, for example, of the countless satirical barbs directed against hacks, privileged by the Communist party, who suddenly have become great democrats, shouting their heads off about creative freedom. How many poems can one write about the fact that *glasnost* gives the opportunist the opportunity to take yet another complete turn in his acrobatic career? What is much more touching and ultimately healthful is the process of poetic "rehabilitation" of those poets who were purged both in the 1930s and after the war. Last year alone, for example, I read no fewer than three poems devoted to the memory of Ievhen Pluzhnyk, and many more dedicated to the anonymous or collective poet-martyr. Ihor Rymaruk's poem, quoted earlier, is an excellent example of this.

Glasnost also gives the young Ukrainian poets the opportunity to express their patriotism with a fervor probably unprecedented in the history of Soviet Ukrainian literature, since this emotion is now completely unqualified. Their definitions of the motherland, however, are not at all uplifting. The notes of pessimism in some of these poems are reminiscent of the early Romantic poetry before Shevchenko, as we see in the following lines by Bohdan Stelmakh:

I zarusly nedobudovy,
Sama trava.
Sumni slova pisen', bratove,
Irzha vkryva.³⁵

[And the unfinished buildings are overgrown. Nothing but grass. The sad words of our songs, my brothers, are covered with rust.]

The antiquated form of the word *bratove* (brothers) implies the author's wish to cast his bleak image in an historical perspective. Indeed, a large number of poets examine the question of the motherland historically, rediscovering

the national past, there to find mostly grief. Valerii Herasymchuk, for instance, goes as far back as the medieval times:

Ishly vorohy. I khtos' im khliba kraiv.
 Khtos' nalyvav u kelykhy vyna.
 Dilyly Rus' na kuseni okrain,
 Minialy viru, nazvy, imena...
 Usim distalos'! Rus' taky velyka:
 Iak ne lany z zhytamy, to bory!
 (Iz lyp naderty mozhna dosyt' lyka,
 A vzhe z liudei shcho khochesh, te i dery.)³⁶

[The enemies were coming. And somebody cut them some bread. Somebody poured them wine into chalices. They cut Rus' into pieces of borderlands (in the original, a possible pun on the word "Ukraine"), they changed the (local) faith, the names of places and of people. Everybody got a piece! Rus', after all, is large: if not fields of wheat, then deep forests! You can tear enough bast off lime tree trunks (a pun on the proverb "*dery lyko poky deret'sia*"—"grab while the grabbing is good," with a possible secondary reference to material for bast shoes) and as for the people, you can rip off them whatever your heart desires.]

Historical themes predominate particularly in the genre of the long poem, as it has been masterfully practiced by Lina Kostenko, among other poets of the generation of the 1960s. As for the younger authors, they also try their hand at it, with some notable results: Leonid Toma's powerful poem "*Danylo Apostol* (Danylo Apostol)," Valentyn Bendiuh's shorter work "*Monoloh Meletiiia Smotrytskoho* (Monologue of Meletii Smotrytsky)," several works by Pavlo Movchan, and a number of others.

It is not surprising that within this thematic framework, and along with continuous coverage in the press, the fate of the Ukrainian language occupies a central place in the poetry of the young. Taking Shevchenko's famous lines as her intertext, Oksana Pakhlovska writes:

Strashnyi myslyvets' vyide znov na lovy.
 V iedynu sitku vsikh ptakhiv zhrebe.
 Raby—tse natsiia, kotra ne maiie Slova.
 Tomu i ne mozhe zakhystyt' sebe.³⁷

[The terrible huntsman will again come out for the hunt. He will rake up all birds into his single net. Slaves are a nation which does not possess the Word, and therefore cannot defend itself.]

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that dozens of poems published in periodicals last year were devoted to the danger in which the Ukrainian language finds itself today. We have also seen strong passages, or entire poems, devoted to the hymning of language as such. The language of poetry, in particular, is glorified as the only salvation in our world—the only love that will never betray.

Finally, the new spirit of openness has opened up a new, and highly surprising, thematic vein in Soviet Ukrainian poetry—poetry about the soul, about

spiritual existence (occasionally close to mysticism), and unabashedly religious poetry. Some young poets greeted the millennium last year by accusing Christianity of having destroyed the pagan beliefs which alone had been truly Ukrainian. Many more, however, have gone the less excentric route by writing about the new barbarism having destroyed the ancient Christian churches in Ukrainian towns and villages. Valentyn Bendiuh, for instance, wrote an excellent short poem about a mute old bellringer who dies when his little village church is closed down by the authorities.³⁸ I will now quote in full a text by Hennadii Moroz which I consider—together with Rymaruk's poem, quoted earlier—the best work that I read in 1988:

Iak vy zovetes', doroho v kufaietchsi hrudnia,
 Khutir zabutyi, zamshila kaplytsia pusta?
 Kholodno hospodu. Kholodno bohu... A liudiam?
 Ot i pishly. I zabuly. Ne znialy z khresta.
 Smittia—oshuiu, suvii pavutynnia—odesnu.
 Z kosmosu hlianuty—i prosl'ozytys': krasa!
 Mozhe voskresnut'? A spravdi, uziat' i voskresnut' .
 Til'ky navishcho? Dlia koho otut voskresat' ?
 Babo v mohyli i viri, na samomu spodi,
 V khustochtsi bilii i chornykh, iak pole, rokakh,
 Pravdu kazaly vy: vse u rukakh u hospodnikh,
 Vse, pochynaiuchy z tsviakhiv, u boha v rukakh.³⁹

[What is your name, road, in your white cotton jacket of December, with your abandoned farm house and a moldy empty chapel? The Lord is cold. God is cold... And the people? They simply left. And forgot. Did not take Him down from the cross. /The trash—to the left, the bale of cobwebs—to the right. One could look down from the cosmos and shed a tear: Oh, how beautiful! Perhaps one should rise from the dead. Really, just go ahead and rise from the dead. But then, for what? For whom here should one bother with the resurrection? / Grandmother in your grave and in your faith, at the very bottom, in your white kerchief and your years, as black as the field—you were finally right: everything is in God's hands. Everything—beginning with the iron nails—is in the hands of God.]

Not only have I learned to distinguish between the two Ostapchuks, Herasymchuk and Herasymiuk, or Taran and Taranenko, but I have learned to respect most of their and their friends' work and to love some of it. In the time of reconstruction, the best of them are powerfully reconstructing Soviet Ukrainian poetry. It is my own deeply vital concern that this beautiful and varied garden not only survive but flourish—that it not be brutally trampled yet once again. In the meantime, I am busy taking notes on *this year's* poetry published in Soviet Ukraine.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ "Khudozhnii obraz perebudovy okресliuetsia: kruhlyi stil," *Literaturna Ukraina*, 24 March 1988.
- ² Natalka Bilotserkivets, "Konfidentsiina rozmova," *Zhovten*, no. 3 (March 1988): 120.
- ³ Mykola Riabchuk, "Imitatsiia—ta shche i iaka!" *Zhovten*, no. 7 (July 1988): 122.
- ⁴ L. Herasymchuk, "Krytyka na rubezhakh sohodennia," *Prapor*, no. 1 (January 1986): 86.
- ⁵ Oksana Zabuzhko, "Kultura i tradytsiia," *Prapor*, no. 3 (March 1988): 157–168.
- ⁶ Valerii Illia, "Vilnyi virsh—vid choho vin vilnyi? Polemichni notatky," *Vitshyzna*, no. 7 (July 1987): 156.
- ⁷ Liudmyla Taran, "Tendentsii i paradoksy," *Zhovten*, no. 3 (March 1988): 126.
- ⁸ See, for example, the various opinions of the younger critics in "Khudozhnii obraz perebudovy..."
- ⁹ Vasyl Ivashkiv, "Z pozytsii zhyttieutverdzhennia," *Zhovten*, no. 7 (July 1988): 119–120.
- ¹⁰ "Khudozhnii obraz perebudovy..."
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Riabchuk, "Imitatsiia..." 124.
- ¹³ Bilotserkivets, "Konfidentsiina..." 120.
- ¹⁴ See, for example, Lada Fedorovska, "Komus izdastsia ote pysannia," *Zhovten*, no. 6 (June 1988): 118–121.
- ¹⁵ Natalia Okolitenko, "Pospivaimo, pohraimosia... abo Potiomkinski sela v poezii," *Vitshyzna*, no. 11 (November 1988): 184–185. This article is another negative review of Leonid Kulish's poetry.
- ¹⁶ Mykola Iu. Riabchuk, *Potreba slova* (Kiev: Radianskyi pysmennyk, 1985), 170. Quoted in Taran, p. 126.
- ¹⁷ Riabchuk, "Imitatsiia..." 124.
- ¹⁸ Viktor Ostapchuk, "Z ternovoho polia zhyttia," *Zhovten*, no. 5 (May 1988): 121.
- ¹⁹ Ihor Rymaruk, "Perestupnyi vik," *Vitshyzna*, no. 3 (March 1988): 6.
- ²⁰ All improvised prose translations are mine.
- ²¹ See, for example, Mykola Zerov's sonnet "Kapnos tes patridos," with its following strong closure:
- I ty promovysh z pochuttiam lehkym:
—Tam tsilynoiu idut' lemish i ralo.
—Tam znosyt'sia Itaky synii dym.
- [And you will pronounce with a light feeling: There the ploughshare and the plough traverse the virgin land. There the blue smoke of Ithaca rises in the air.]
Mykola Zerov, *Sonnetarium* (Berchtesgaden: Orlyk, 1948), 61.
- ²² Mykola Mirosnynchenko, *Literaturna Ukraina*, 14 April 1988.
- ²³ Klavdiia Koretska, "Iz knyzhky *Chas pik*," *Zhovten*, no. 4 (April 1988): 11.
- ²⁴ Quoted in Bilotserkivets, "Konfidentsiina..." 121.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 123.

²⁶ Oleksandr Hrytsenko, "Sered tupotu nih: Movoznavstvo," *Vitchyzna*, no. 5 (May 1988): 10. The italicized lines at the end of the excerpt constitute a quotation from Pavlo Tychyna's notorious poem "Chuttia iedynoi rodyny" (The Feeling of a Single Family). To appreciate the intent of the quotation, we should glance at its context:

Iak do chuzhoi pryidesh movy.

 Odna v nykh spil'na chuty nytky
 vid davnyny i po s'ohodni.
 I pozychaiesh tuii movu
 v svoiu,—chudovu, prebahatu.
 A vse znakhodyt' tse osnovu
 u syli proletariatu.

[And you will arrive at the foreign language... We hear in them (the foreign and the native language) a single thread, from antiquity to the present. And you borrow that language into your own—so beautiful and so rich. And all of this finds its base in the strength of the proletariat.] *Tvory v shesty tomakh*, vol. 1 (Kiev: DVKhL, 1961), 261–262.

²⁷ Bilotserkivets, "Konfidentsiina..." 123.

²⁸ Taran, "Tendentsii..." 125.

²⁹ Riabchuk, *Potreba slova*, 54–55, quoted by Taran, 125.

³⁰ Iurii Andrukhovych, "Napruha rusla," *Vitchyzna*, no. 11 (November): 15.

³¹ Viktor Ostapchuk, "Ozhyvy: Akvarel z chervonymy chovnamy," *Zhovten*, no. 12 (December 1988): 10.

³² Anatolii Kychynsky, "I vira, i nadiia, i liubov: Avtoportret u protyhazi," *Zhovten*, no. 9 (September 1988): 2. The intertext here is a famous drawing by Georg Grosz.

³³ Bohdan Stelmakh, "Zhyttia bezkonechne: Vylipyv diadko," *Zhovten*, no. 6 (June 1988): 3.

³⁴ Oksana Pakhlovskaya, "Tanets nad provalliam," *Zhovten*, no. 11 (November 1988): 2.

³⁵ Stelmakh, "Zhyttia bezkonechne: Zhal," 4.

³⁶ Valerii Herasymchuk, "Ia shche pryidu: Rus'," *Zhovten*, no. 12 (December 1988): 8.

³⁷ Pakhlovskaya, "Tanets..." 4.

³⁸ Valentyn Bendiiuh, "Chornyi bil: staryi dzvonar," *Zhovten*, no. 9 (September 1988): 12.

³⁹ Hennadii Moroz, "Persnyi prymorozok," *Vitchyzna*, no. 12 (December 1988): 5.