

# *Hryhorii Chubai: Beyond All Expectations*

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Scholars of Ukrainian literature who followed the grim graphomania of the Stalinist period were greatly and pleasantly surprised by the appearance of young poets in the early sixties, the so-called *shestydesiatnyky*, who once again reaffirmed that Ukrainian literature has not been sapped of its vitality and that its strength still lies in the genre of poetry. Such poets as Lina Kostenko, Ivan Drach, Mykola Vinhranovskiy, Vasyl' Symonenko and others, revealed in their poetry the essential mainstays of lyrical expression — an awareness of the individual and his relations with self, nature, and even society. The philosophy underlining their poetry was humanistic; the weapon of the sensitive individual facing a society warped by the days of Stalin was sarcasm. This led to sometimes subtle (Kostenko) and sometimes not so subtle (Symonenko) didacticism which, however, rarely marred their poetry, for they managed to couch their expressions, even didactic ones, in new poetic images, in a language once again honest and free from the clichés of the last thirty years. They were, in short, the Ukrainian counterparts to the “angry young men” of the fifties who, disapproving of the generation of their fathers, struck out against hypocrisy by re-interpreting the world around them in terms of honesty with self, real humanism, and delicately sensitive individual perception. As George S. N. Luckyj aptly remarked, “The greatest achievement of the young poets is the rediscovery of the function of poetry.”<sup>1</sup>

Yet although the *shestydesiatnyky* were fresh and vibrant mainly in comparison with the outworn cliché-ridden poetry of their immediate predecessors, their own poetry, seen in the context of all Ukrainian poetry, did not progress much past the level that Ukrainian poetry attained during the revival of the twenties. To quote Luckyj once again, “Their poetic means are new, though not unrelated to earlier styles. The intellectualism of Drach is reminiscent of the best poems of Mykola Bazhan, and Kostenko’s lyricism resembles that of the early Tychyna.”<sup>2</sup> In short, their poetry though new was still in the era of the early part of

<sup>1</sup> George S. N. Luckyj, “Introduction” to George S. N. Luckyj, ed., *Four Ukrainian Poets* (Quixote, 1969), p. ii.

this century; it was not new in terms of modern poetry as seen in the rest of the Western world. The sad fact remained that the most modern poetry in Ukrainian was not written in Ukraine but outside of its borders, mainly by such émigré poets as The New York Group. One could only hope that this poetry of the sixties would develop into a modern poetry, would proceed into more asymmetric forms and polysemous expressions.

With the new repressions toward the end of the sixties, all hope of any modernization of poetry vanished. Nevertheless, something quite unexpected happened. Toward the middle sixties there began to appear poems by a younger group of poets: Vasyl' Holoborod'ko, Ihor Kalynets', and Hryhorii Chubai. Their poetry was beyond all expectations and with its appearance Ukrainian verse managed to catch up with the most modern poetry of the world.

Their contribution to the development of Ukrainian poetry becomes even more remarkable when one considers that in the present Soviet reality they are proscribed poets and their poetry is completely outlawed. It is true that both Kalynets' (born 1939) and Holoborod'ko (born 1946) managed to have some poems published in periodical publications in the years 1964-65, and that Kalynets' even managed to have his first collection, *Vohon' Kupala* (*The Fire of Kupala*), published in 1966. But with the great critical acclaim that these first poems brought came immediate repression; for example, Holoborod'ko's first collection of verse, ready for print in 1966, was never published. Chubai, on the other hand, has, to my knowledge, been allowed to publish only three small poems in 1966-67 in the journal *Zhovten'*.<sup>3</sup> They are, in short, authors whose works reach readers through the facilities of *samvydav* (the Ukrainian counterpart of *samizdat*). They are known to us mainly because some of their works have been smuggled out of the Soviet Union and published in the West. Such is the case with two collections of poems by Ihor Kalynets': *Poezii z Ukraïny* (*Poetry from Ukraine*) published by "Lettres et Art" in Belgium in 1970, and *Pidsumovuiuchy movchannia* (*Summing up of Silence*) published by *Suchasnist'* in Munich in 1971. Four manuscript collections by Holoborod'ko managed to reach the West and all four of them were published in one volume, *Letiuche vikontse* (*The Flying Window*), by *Smoloskyp* in

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Zhovten'*, No. 8 (1966), pp. 41-2; No. 9 (1967), p. 105.

1970. The bio-bibliographical and critical material on these young poets is almost nonexistent.<sup>4</sup>

The worst in this respect concerns Chubai, about whom almost nothing is known.<sup>5</sup> One does not even know the year of his birth, not to mention any data on his creative life. One only assumes that he is of the generation of Kalynets' and Holoborod'ko and supports this assumption on the few available examples of his work which have reached the West. This is most unfortunate for even though there is a great deal of similarity in the three authors, Chubai, even on the basis of the few examples, seems to be the most modern and interesting of the three. It is therefore the intention of this article to introduce to the scholar of Ukrainian literature Hryhorii Chubai on the basis of his one long poem "Vidshukuvannia prychetnoho" ("The Search for the Accomplice"), and in this way to indicate at least partially the heights which Ukrainian poetry has reached in the last few years.

The poem "The Search for the Accomplice" appeared without any notation as to who the author was or where the poem came from in the eleventh number of the journal *Suchasnist'* for 1970. It was only later that one found out (mainly through the issues of the *Ukrainskyi visnyk*) that Chubai was a poet in Ukraine and that he was actively involved in the dissident movement, mainly as a defender of Moroz to whom he even dedicated a cycle of poems.<sup>6</sup> It is extremely difficult, therefore, to write anything about Hryhorii Chubai which cannot be

<sup>4</sup> For Holoborod'ko see Ivan Dziuba, "U dyvosviti ridnoi khaty," *Dnipro*, No. 4 (1965), pp. 145-52; Petro Holubenko, "Poeziia Vasylia Holoborod'ka," in Vasyli Holoborod'ko, *Letiuche vikontse* (Paris-Baltimore, 1970), pp. 5-11. For Kalynets' see Roman Senkovich, "Cherhova nesposodivanka," in Ihor Kalynets', *Poezii z Ukrainy* (Bruxelles, 1970), pp. v-xiv.

<sup>5</sup> There is virtually no bio-bibliographical material available on Chubai. The only concrete proof of his existence is the appearance of the three poems in *Zhovten'*, of one long poem in *Suchasnist'*, No. 7 (1970), and several poems in the same journal No. 2 (1971), as well as one poem in *Ukrainskyi visnyk* (Paris-Baltimore, 1971), IV, 70. From the publications in *Zhovten'* we know that he is from the village of Berezena of the Dubno region. His presence is also constantly noted in the available issues of the *Ukrainskyi visnyk* where his name appears in connection with various protests and petitions and also as one of the names constantly used by the KGB in their interrogations; e.g., "Do you know the poet Chubai?" "Did you read any of his poems?" etc. From the *Visnyk* we also learn that Chubai has at least one collection of verse, entitled *Svitlo is spovid'* (1970), and another long poem, *Vertep*, neither of which seems to have been published in Ukraine except in *samydav* editions. *Vertep* has been published in the West by *Ukrainskyi visnyk*, No. 5 and also reprinted in *Vyzvolnyi shliakh*, January 1972. For references to Chubai in *Ukrainskyi visnyk* see I-II, 219; III, 15, 71; IV, 32, 43, 70, 163-5.

<sup>6</sup> See *Ukrainskyi visnyk*, IV, 70.

derived from reading the few examples of his poetry. Even though this is a rather uncomfortable situation for a scholar used to the idea of supporting his assertions by various citations from preceding critical materials, it is perhaps much more interesting and fruitful in the sense that one does not prejudge the work on the authority of the former criticism. It is in fact very similar to the formalistically oriented courses where a student is provided with examples of poetry without being given the names of the authors and is forced to discuss the given work on its own merits — not on the merits of an author's fame or the critical opinion of him.

It seems most appropriate, therefore, before proceeding to the discussion of the poem itself to quote it in its entirety here.

*The Search for the Accomplice*

H. Chubai (trans. D. Struk)

He saw today  
in his own eye  
yesterday's tear

the day after tomorrow in his own eye  
he saw again  
yesterday's tear  
and he understood that he will never  
be able to weep it out  
and he understood  
    that this is already  
    the end.

THEN

he kissed the face of the evening road  
with his soles up to  
the precipice of silence a long time  
and with difficulty he undressed the last phrase  
nervously unbuttoning the buttons of words  
a long time he was afraid to gaze  
at his reflection in the note  
re

and when he looked, he saw  
no one there  
then  
a tree grew in the bell of fright  
then  
a giant tree grew  
and split the bell  
and split the bellfry the tree  
of fright  
and placed on its shoulders  
a whole flock of rooks.  
that tree passed very slowly  
and when it finally passed  
all suddenly saw  
how a black apple rolled down a spasmodically frozen line  
  
a black apple is rolling  
stopping midst a field  
and a soul of a suicide rides up  
on a grey horse of smoke  
in order to find the accomplice  
to that suicide.  
and its double stops on the other side of the apple  
on a horse of green clay.  
and the soul turns to him  
with its accusations  
and the double, on the other side of the black apple,  
presents his excuses  
and then the double tells the soul  
its very own accusations  
and word by word the soul repeats  
the double's very own excuses  
and when the double, angered,  
begins to repeat himself  
the soul will hide behind a knife  
and when the double quadruples himself  
the soul will hide behind a candle  
and the soul will hide behind a poppy seed  
when the double tens himself

and fright exhorts all to wander aimlessly  
among the signposts  
enthusiastically it calls to wander  
for already  
on that side of the apple  
a thousand doubles are grazing  
their green horses

### ON THAT SIDE OF THE APPLE

#### A THOUSAND DOUBLES

and nowhere to hide  
no, it's not I, not I  
perhaps a flower  
no, it's not I, not I  
a green horse  
no, it's not I, not I  
a thousand doubles

and what if it's really a flower, a distant flower  
that for three hundred years, frightened by rumours of  
the Inquisition, blooms on the wall  
of the house

perhaps it's the flower that saw in him  
the inquisitor and brought him to suicide

it's the flower's eight petals  
like eight faces  
that appeared to him

it's the fragrance of the flower which flew over  
the tingling watery surface of  
the window it's time which has stopped on the blue path  
and he saw in the aquarium of his  
yesterday's tear  
a goldfish gasping for air  
and around there was no river  
no sea, lake  
nor stream was around  
only helpless imagination  
surrounded itself with uncountable suggestions

For every one of the flower's eight faces  
the imagination surrounded itself and staggered  
staggered and fell  
and never got up and did not come  
did not ask — what time  
did not ask — why the door opened  
did not ask — where they buried the goldfish  
on the sun or on the moon  
and is it very frightening when there's inquisition  
when one cannot  
remember the voice and cannot forget  
the face  
when for a very long time no one comes.

and later, still, she comes  
and with a very accomplice body  
and with very accomplice lips  
and as if calling the far wind she calls herself

and the echo answers  
and calls her lonely

as if a lonesome woman  
she calls herself  
and then he comes  
and commits suicide

there

where West is a side of the world

there

where grass is dream-grass

there

where today is all the special and the ordinary  
days in the world  
where the shore of loneliness is too white  
and the night too passing  
and the road flows without the slightest splash.

and no matter where one goes  
it means to by-pass  
to by-pass  
one's own body  
to by-pass  
one's own children  
and then to by-pass, all the nights in the world  
and then the cross on one's own grave  
and all this so simply  
as strangers by-pass one another  
on the street, as the hand by-passes  
the uncountable number of raindrops  
  
and to remain here  
  
means to become an accomplice  
indeed, even to give birth to a joking gesture  
  
there's no illusion here but plain belonging  
even if one were only to listen to how the sand  
whispers in the palms  
even if one were only to look into the green eyes  
of chlorophyll  
  
even  
  
the white butterfly of lilies  
on the water  
  
even the rings on blue water  
the disappearing green rings  
  
even then  
when  
no one  
nowhere  
never  
and what if really suddenly nowhere  
and what if really suddenly no one  
and what if really suddenly never  
  
and only we  
intentionally seen



and only we  
emphatically existing  
are frightened above all else in the world  
of our own inexistence  
we believe  
that everything some day  
we believe  
that everything some where  
and our body  
and our souls  
and give us this day  
you see

it's a door opening, a door which really is  
it's one of us coming and saying that  
he saw today things beyond the visibility of things  
and that  
he sees a body beyond the visibility  
of our body  
and that very wittily  
we play at being alive  
(but a wall knows a wall even more wittily than we)  
and a thousand visible tigers  
frighten us less than one  
invisible star, even though it is  
the star that we lack  
far in front in order to go to it  
even though it is the star we  
lack far behind  
in order to return  
to it.

after a while one of us runs  
to ascertain if  
there still is a wall  
and then all of us together run  
each to his wall  
and zealously we draw  
any one of the visible stars  
and we also draw a road to it

past a huge white ant hill  
through ten violins to the horizon  
and then further up the path  
of lightning.  
and having finished  
we hurry  
to fill up the space between our walls  
completely with  
buildings, grass, ourselves  
stones, water, chickens  
so that no one settle there  
invisible  
no one different from  
us.

and already the curse  
has been forced outside the area of the mouth  
and the teeth have been firmly shut  
so that it cannot return and the string  
has been closed into a black case  
so that the string will not call the  
curse back home.

### THE CURSE

taught to simulate  
    a ship  
    water  
    clay  
    the apple of Paradise  
    and the titmouse

### THE CURSE

taught to simulate  
everything simultaneously  
and each separately  
and equipped to search  
for the accomplice to the suicide  
which is under some tree  
which is by some door

which is over some eye  
but wherever the curse will come

only very long parallel smiles  
only a small toy rifle  
only a large paper flower

### THERE

the shores do not run to overtake the escaping water  
and eyebrows do not run to overtake the escaping eyes  
and the road flows through the window  
up to an icon  
and the smoke over the burned out ruins  
stands on its knees there

### THERE

### HAVING COME

### THE CURSE

### WILL HEAR

you curse are a curse  
but we are not ears  
you curse are a tree  
but we are not leaves  
you curse are a ship  
but we are no harbour

and our parallel smiles  
will never twist into an angry grimace  
we are much too good  
and all that's left for you  
is to fall dead  
across our endless  
parallel smiles

even if you're a ship  
even if you're a fish  
even if you're leaves

Even

if

he himself

comes there  
he will not find himself there  
and he will be surprised and he will call forth  
why am I not here  
I remember very well  
that I am to be here precisely here.  
why is there some tree growing here  
why is there some bird flying here  
why is there some house standing here  
I remember very well  
that I am to be here precisely here.  
and then from that house  
someone will come  
who is very good  
and another  
who is even better  
and another  
who is really very good

and thrice they will carry around the  
one who came

his very own  
dead curse so that he  
believe that he himself  
is not there  
but he will not believe

then they will lead around him  
nine times  
the gray horse of smoke  
on which for quite a long time  
the rider of his soul has not ridden

but he will not believe  
    and his body will come and  
    it will search  
its own traces and it will run  
perplexed around the house and it will want  
to raze it not having found any trace of  
itself it will want to catch the bird

and pluck its feathers.  
but the body will by-pass the house  
but the body will by-pass the bird  
*and it will cry helplessly in the shade of a tree*

and a flaming cloud will pass by it  
and a hand that gives a penny will pass by it  
and a hand that takes a penny will pass by it  
and the city soviet of workers' deputies will pass by it  
and will chase there a whole  
swarm of suicides  
suspected of something alive  
they will sit on the grass around his body  
around the body  
around the tree  
around the bird  
and for a long time they will talk  
about how only the suspicion of living  
does not allow them to leave this earth  
but also does not allow them to resurrect themselves  
and forces them to be intentionally  
living right here  
around the body, around the house  
around the tree, around the bird  
around us

They will sit on the grass  
and behind each one  
will sit ashes  
they will listen  
how the water learns to cry  
not yet having learned to be salty  
someone will speak consoling words  
someone will rock a poppy seed and will send it rolling  
over the floor  
all will be afraid of its frightening rumbling  
all will say  
it's a thousand stars coming  
all will say  
it's a thousand women coming

all will say  
it's a thousand flowers coming  
and behind each one  
will sit ashes

but someone invisible will suddenly say  
Christ Has Risen  
and all will turn their heads back

everyone will want to see behind him a fire  
everyone will see behind him  
ashes

someone will suggest  
to halt the debates  
but the invisible one will again say  
Christ Has Risen

All will slowly turn  
their heads back  
not to frighten the one who's behind  
all will suddenly hear how on the sea of black pepper  
the green waves turn yellow all will suddenly  
see

on the far shore a star which they never saw before  
all will start waiting for the tiny  
boat of the nightingale  
that is to take them to that shore.

the waves on the sea of black pepper  
turn yellow and calm  
the knotty bottom will regain sight  
and someone invisible will again say  
Christ Has Risen  
all will slowly turn their heads back  
Any minute now they are to see  
behind themselves  
a fire.

The first thing that strikes one after reading the poem (albeit in translation) is the specific rhythm peculiar to modern poetry since the

days of T. S. Eliot. This rhythm is based on the recitative prayer-like effect produced by the repetition of whole lines, often with very small variations. Compare, for example, Chubai's

and what if really suddenly nowhere  
 and what if really suddenly no one  
 and what if really suddenly never  
 and only we  
 intentionally seen  
 and only we  
 emphatically existing

.....  
 and our body  
 and our soul  
 and give us this day<sup>7</sup>

with the beginning of Eliot's *Ash-Wednesday*:

Because I do not hope to turn  
 Because I do not hope  
 Because I do not hope to turn  
 .....  
 Because I do not hope to know again  
 .....  
 Because I do not think  
 Because I know I shall not know  
 The one veritable transitory power  
 Because I cannot drink

The element of prayer is very important in both examples. Eliot ends the first part of his poem with "Pray for us now and at the hour of our death," which is taken right out of a prayer, and Chubai ends the strophe above with a line directly out of *The Lord's Prayer*. Besides specific examples both poems depend heavily on the recitative effect of prayer not only for rhythm but also to bring across the underlying religious motif. This is not, however, a paper on the influences of Eliot on

<sup>7</sup> Even in the first published poem by Chubai in *Zhovten'*, No. 8 (1966), p. 41, the poem "Holubin'" ("The Blueness") already contains elements of this particular rhythmic structure:

I have not yet looked  
     at the stars from close up  
 I have not yet walked  
     over the moon's craters

Chubai nor on the similarities between the two (although a paper of this nature would be most illuminating). Suffice it so say that Chubai greatly draws on the rhythmical patterns used and developed by Eliot.

But the similarity of Chubai to Eliot or for that matter to any other Western poet ends when one approaches the subject of imagery. In fact, the imagery is the unifying link between the three poets mentioned: Kalynets', Chubai, and Holoborod'ko. Moreover, it is an imagery which is somehow rooted in the ancient pre-Christian Ukrainian folk beliefs. (It is interesting to note that the publishers of Kalynets' *Poetry from Ukraine* have illustrated the collection with drawings by the young artist Soroka which are full of allusions to various pagan and pagan-Christian folk beliefs. The same illustrations and one in particular — "The Saint" — could stand as an illustration to the given poem by Chubai.)<sup>\*</sup> Furthermore, Dziuba's statement about Holoborod'ko that in his (Holoborod'ko's) poetry "comes to life the world of the ancient animistic beliefs about nature; the world of our distant 'naïve' forefather or a credulous child, a world filled with strange beings, full of magic sounds and colours . . . the world of the Ukrainian folk, still pagan demonology. . . ." — this statement can equally be applied to the poetry of Kalynets' and to the poem of Chubai.

In this respect one must view the whole ritual of the soul hiding behind the knife, candle, and the poppy seed — reminiscent of some ancient warding-off ceremony. In this respect also must be seen the whole incantative dialogue of the "we" with the "curse": "You curse are a curse/ but we are not ears" etc. — so reminiscent of the verbal formulas in the pagan incantations. It is the ability to merge the ancient, the primordial verbal formulations, with the modern and to couch them in modern poetic forms that makes Chubai's poem so great and which in fact places him above the modern poets among the émigrés. The latter managed to adopt modern poetic forms but could never fill the forms with native Ukrainian content and searched for their inspiration in foreign (e.g., Spanish) cultures. Chubai's poem is modern yet it is still grounded within the Ukrainian folk tradition, generating its images and moods from the most ancient beliefs, ceremonies, and the most ancient literary expression — the oral tradition of incantation.

There is further similarity, however, between Chubai and Eliot and

\* See the enclosed reproduction from I. Kalynets', *Poezii z Ukrainy*, p. 20.

° I. Dziuba, "U dyvosviti ridnoii khaty," p. 145.



for that matter with other modern poets. It is based on the fact that modern poetry, on the whole, is concerned with and directed toward social issues. In this respect Chubai differs from his immediate predecessors, the *shestydesiatnyky*, who, as lyricists, were primarily concerned with the sensitive individual and his personal reflections. When society threatened this individual the poets resorted to sarcasm (Symonenko) or even satire (Drach's ballads) as a means of defense. Chubai resorts to neither. He faces the problem of the individual in society on a more cerebral level and through poetic expression transforms these problems into multi-tiered refractions. Thus, as in most modern poetry, Chubai's "The Search for the Accomplice" is extremely polysemous.



Even the title itself allows for various levels of meaning. The keys to the understanding of this poem lie hidden in the various folk beliefs on which the poet draws, and a more exhaustive study of these beliefs would be a prerequisite to a detailed analysis of this poem.

It is interesting to note, however, that the aforementioned illustration by Soroka contains many of the images found in Chubai's poem: there is the bellfry with a frightened face behind it; there is the eight petal flower on the side of a house and two frightened men in the house, frightened of the "Inquisition"; there is the bird; there is also something which looks like the devil but can be interpreted as the "curse" capable of simulating everything. All these elements appear in the drawing as if they were visual representations of that which Chubai is portraying verbally in his poem. Moreover, it is also interesting to note that Ukrainian Easter eggs which merge pagan and Christian symbols also contain some of the same images that are used by Chubai: for example, the already mentioned "eight petaled flower" — the symbol of the sun god and later associated with Christ — is almost a constant feature on each Easter egg; the "gold fish" — the early Christian symbol of Christ — also appears frequently. This only proves that some of the symbols used by Chubai are archetypal for the Ukrainian pagan and Christian folk tradition.

Although, as mentioned above, the poem can be interpreted on various levels, it is basically concerned with guilt, be it the guilt of an individual afraid of his own inexistence, or the guilt of a whole nation composed of "thousands of doubles." The guilt arises from the inability to believe, to have faith. Although the poem can be interpreted as a description of an individual's anguish at the fact of having realized that he lacks the necessary faith to live, knowing the situation in which Chubai is writing one tends to give the poem larger dimensions and to accept it as a statement of an individual facing the Soviet reality. Fright, then, logically, is what prevents the soul from finding the accomplice to its destruction. It is fright which breeds thousands of doubles and it is fright which exhorts "all to wander aimlessly." It is fear which forces each and every one to point to someone else as the guilty party — even if the guilty party is nature itself, the nature of a people depraved by "three hundred years" of subjugation (It is interesting to note here that it is the eight point flower which is the symbol for Christ which is linked with this subjugation. Is Chubai referring to the three hundred years Ukrainians have spent under the Russian orthodoxy?), frightened

by rumours of the Inquisition. The fear is so great that no one asks really "is it very frightening when there's inquisition"; the people have been driven to fear without questioning. Out of fear people give up hope and commit spiritual suicide. But the poet continues by showing that this, of course, is not the answer, this is just by-passing the real issues. But neither is the answer to be found in total acceptance of the system: "to remain here" means "to become an accomplice" and on top of that it is a futile gesture. The only solution to fear is the realization that one is afraid only of one's own inexistence. This realization will "open the door" to a different perception of life, one full of belief in the invisible, in the spiritual. And even though people are more afraid of one invisible star than of real tigers it is this very faith in the invisible star which people must have to survive. Without this faith people are just playing at existence. Even in dreams people are just playing at existence. Even in dreams people are afraid to believe in the unseen, in the "different from us," and quickly fill their life with material trivia which stifles their spirituality. The accomplice to one's own spiritual suicide, then, is fear of having faith in the spiritual.

In exasperation at their spiritual suicide people will send forth a curse, powerful in all sorts of ways but ineffectual in the given society of hypocrites with pretended goodness, who will try to convince the few who are still spiritually alive that they are not alive at all, that they simply do not exist and never have existed (a fate understandable to those who have been "purged"). Yet these will refuse to believe that they have been non-existent and after a futile search for proof of their existence they will end up together with other near suicides who have been damned for no other reason than a suspicion of still being "alive," of having faith. It is among these people that faith will finally triumph ("Believe and you shall be saved"), and after a long waiting and after several false hopes the true moment will come and their belief will produce fire — symbol for life — and not just ashes — death.

The above is but one possible interpretation of what Chubai is trying to say in his poem. It is perhaps too simplistic, as all interpretations of such polysemous poems tend to be. Yet this is not of prime importance. The validity of Chubai's poem does not rest on a given interpretation but on the fact that each person cannot so much interpret as feel what the poet is trying to say. Chubai achieves this by the excellent combination of rhythm and imagery, of modern form and ancient symbols, and in doing this produces one of the finest examples of truly modern Ukrainian

poetry written to date. In the given political situation this is truly beyond all expectations.

### RÉSUMÉ/ABSTRACT

#### *Hryhorii Chubai: Beyond All Expectations*

L'article s'efforce de donner une image des résultats les plus récents de la poésie contemporaine ukrainienne par la présentation d'une analyse et d'une traduction de "Vidshukuvannia prychetnoho" (La recherche d'un complice) de Hryhorii Chubai.

Cette présentation prouve que Hryhorii Chubai et ses contemporains (Holoborod'ko et Kalynets'), — en ce qui concerne la modernité de leur poésie —, ont dépassé les poètes des années soixantes, les "shestydesiatnyky."

Le langage figuré du poème est fondé sur un mélange très intéressant de symboles païens, chrétiens, et contemporains. Le rythme provient en grande partie des cadences récitatives que l'on trouve dans des prières.

L'expression est polysémantique, quoique le sujet soit plutôt social. Tous ces éléments font du poème "La recherche d'un complice" de Chubai un des meilleurs exemples de ce qu'il y a de mieux dans la poésie moderne ukrainienne.

D. S.