

ALEXANDER BLOK

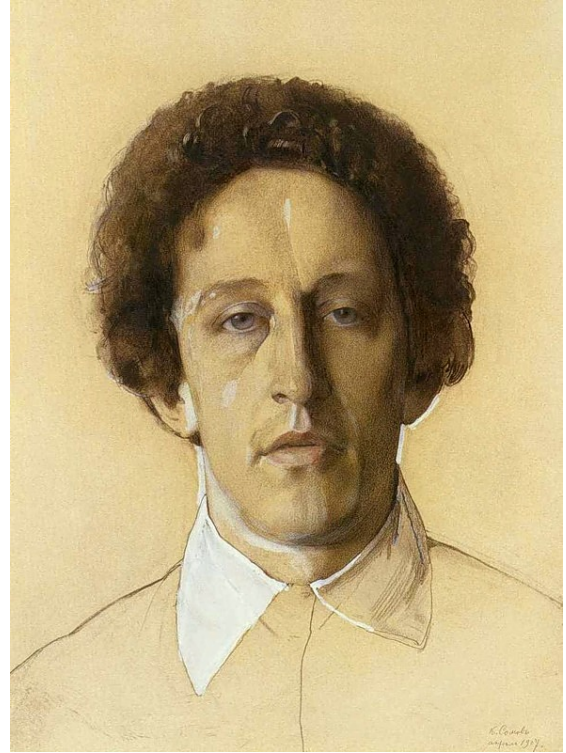
SAINT PETERSBURG (1880-1921)

LANGUAGE: RUSSIAN

Ночь, улица, фонарь, аптека

Ночь, улица, фонарь, аптека,
Бесмысленный и тусклый свет.
Живи ещё хоть четверть века -
Всё будет так. Исхода нет.

Умрёшь - начнешь опять сначала
И повторится всё, как встарь:
Ночь, ледяная рябь канала,
Аптека, улица, фонарь.



Alexander Blok was born in Saint Petersburg, into an intellectual family. His father was a law professor in Warsaw, and his maternal grandfather the head of Saint Petersburg State University. After his parents' separation, Blok lived with relatives near Moscow.

Blok considered his poetical output as comprised of three volumes. The first volume is composed of his early poems about the Fair Lady, his wife Lyuba. The second volume comments upon the impossibility of attaining the ideal for which he craved. The third volume, featuring his poems from pre-revolutionary years, is livelier. In this volume Blok returns to classical models while continuing to include themes of despair, chaos, the modern city, and the absurdity of human existence. This poem is from that volume.

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TRANSLATOR'S GLOSSARY			
WORD	ROMANIZED	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
аптека	apteka (n.)	a store where medicinal drugs are dispensed and sold	drugstore, pharmacy, chemist's shop, apothecary, corner store
бессмысленный	bessmyslennyi (adj.)	having little or not use or purpose	pointless, senseless, meaningless, foolish, inane, idle, in vain, worthless
будет	budet (future v.)	to stay in the same place or position	be, stay, remain, be there
четверть	chetvert' (n.)	each of four equal parts into which something can be divided	quarter, fourth of
ещё	eshchio (pron.)	used to refer to an additional thing of a type already mentioned	another, more
фонарь	fonar' (n.)	a light illuminating a road, typically on a tall pole	streetlight, streetlamp, lamp, lantern, light
и	i (conj.)	in addition to or following	and, then
исхода	iskhoda (n.)	the final part of something; a termination of a state or situation	end, resolution, close, conclusion, exit, way out, solution
как	kak (adv.)	used in comparisons	as, like
канала	kanala (n.)	an artificial waterway for boats or irrigation	canal, channel, sewer
хоть	khot' (part.)	despite the possibility, no matter whether	even, even if, if you like
ледяная	ledianaia (adj.)	covered with or consisting of ice; very cold	icy, glacial, ice-cold, frozen
начнёшь	nachniosh' (future v.)	to come into being or have a starting point at a certain time or place	start, begin, commence, take off
нет	net (determ.)	not any	no
ночь	noch' (n.)	the time from sunset to sunrise	night, evening, after hours, dark hours
опять	opiat' (adv.)	another time	again, once more, yet again, anew, over again
повторится	povtoritsia (v.)	to occur again in the same way or form	repeat, reoccur, recur, happen again, replicate itself
рябь	riab' (n.)	a small wave or series of waves on a surface of water	ripple, wavelet, undulation, ruffle, ridge

WORD	ROMANIZED	DEFINITION	POSSIBLE SYNONYMS
сначала	snachala (adv.)	from/at the beginning	all over again, afresh
свет	svet (n.)	the natural agent that stimulates sight and makes things visible	light, illumination
так	tak (adv.)	referring back to a state previously mentioned	as it was, the same, the same as now, the same as always, so, just so
тусклый	tusklyi (adj.)	lacking brightness, vividness, or sheen	dull, tarnished, dim, faded, dreary, lusterless, flat, wan
улица	ulitsa (n.)	a public road in a city or town, usually lined by buildings on each side	street, road, avenue, pavement
умрёшь	umriesh' (future v.)	to stop living	die, pass away, depart, perish, bite the dust
века	veka (n.)	a period of one hundred years	century, age, lifetime
всё	vsio (pron.)	all things	everything, it all, all
встарь	vstar' (adv.)	in earlier times	formerly, in olden times/days, in the past, before
живи	zhivi (imperative v.)	to remain alive	live, exist, go on, live through, experience

REFLECTING AND FINDING MEANING

Group Member Names:

Date: _____

Pick a scribe for the group, and work together to answer the questions.

What are the best parts of this translation, and why do you think they are good?

What elements of the original poem did you lose in the translation? What did you manage to keep?

Did you achieve something new with your translation, and if so, does it make sense in the poem or not?
