

## **Steve Komarnyckyj -- One Poem**

+

## **Ihor Pavlyuk – Two Translations by Steve Komarnyckyj**

### **Steve Komarnyckyj**

#### **Pavlo's Lament**

After Tychyna

I

In the replay of our last embrace  
Your mouth moves towards mine,  
In some well lit, soundless place  
Where desires happen

But at the last moment you slip  
Away from me and disintegrate  
Into the shadows of the Steppe.  
The noiseless of wheat

II

Spring in the flex of an elm's branch  
Or the chance  
Dimple of water  
Where the river shapes to sand and stone  
Or scampers through itself laughing

III

Summer in the blonde or the bronze surf  
Of rye,  
At mid day or at dusk  
As you walk by. One of the stalks perhaps  
Plucked like an eyelash.

IV

Autumn comes bereft of love  
The half formed human  
Shapes of fog,  
A blurred wave,  
A dagger in a silk glove.

V

Snowflakes partner and dance  
Into a kind of death,  
While the wind laments them  
With its almost human breath.

Too supple to hold,  
You elude me, leaving my arms  
Empty and cold. Soft feathers on my face,  
With a touch difficult as love or chance.

All our voices lost  
In a huge silence.

## **Two Poems by Ihor Pavlyuk, translated from the Ukrainian by Steve Komarnyckyj**

### **НІЧНІ ДОРОГИ**

У нічних поїздах я проводжу вже ночі шість років.  
В мене є своє місце у них: 45, бокове.  
З нього зорі сміються з обличчями ветхих пророків  
І ногами вперед спить і їде кудись все живе.

Поряд хтось і не спить. Сконцентровані запахи, звуки.  
Тут чи доля, чи випадок різних з'єднали людей.  
Бо вагон – як маленька планета з бабами, батьками, онуками...  
І не кажуть, що їде, а кажуть, що поїзд їде.

Сповідаться хтось незнайомим своїм покупейникам.  
У вагоні вогонь, як церковна лампадка, мокрить.  
І житейська дорога здається нам білими рейками  
Перед пляшкою віскі і зоряним блиском ікри.

...У нічних літаках, кораблях все подібно.  
Лиш вийти складніше,  
Коли волі захочеться більше, ніж болю доріг.  
Нам здається, що їдем кудись, доки... доки тут ніч ще,  
Доки люде і збоку і знизу, а зорі – вгорі.

## Overnight Trains

I have spent six years of my life on the overnight train  
I even have my own place, 45, by the aisle,  
The window where the stars, the faces of derelict prophets, shine.  
My are legs laid in front of me as I just listen for a while.

Someone rustles nearby. Concentrated echoes and scents,  
The half light where we are a coincidence.  
The wagon a microcosm of children grandmothers, parents.  
We do not say we go, but say it is the trains

That go... someone confesses their sins to a stranger  
The light blurred with moisture, a candle seen  
Through the window of a church in the rain, a flicker  
On the path of our life, simply steel rails, drawing

Together never to meet, the flask of whisky  
The wheels scraping sparks...  
In night planes, ships, all is the same  
Except it is harder to exit,  
When the will desires more than the agony of journeys

And, it seems, we travel until the night comes,  
While there are people around and below  
And stars as always  
Above through the window.

## Медитація

Цвинтарна тиша.  
Сум лебединий.  
І яструбина ніч.  
Крона... корона...  
Корінь-людина...  
В жовтому шумі свіч.

Муза жагуча –  
Що із жагою  
Навіть грошить, грішить...  
Що ж ти, життя,  
Мою душу гоїш,  
Допоки тіло спить?

Генів моїх шабленята вперті  
Гостряться об сльозу.  
Я вільний жити  
І вільний вмерти.  
А ще  
Я хочу на Суд.

А так... у світі  
Все уже звідав:  
І славу, й любов, і цвіт...  
Добре було б –  
Якби мама Звідтам  
Прийшла...  
Чи хоч передала привіт...

А так – то прірва...  
Діти тішать...  
Коней люблю, ріку.  
Вірш, наче лист із калини,  
Вирву –  
І залишу на піску.

Цукор чи сіль  
У моїй клепсидрі –  
Все ж все одно скипить.  
Цвинтарна тиша.  
Смертонька хитра.  
Вічність – то мить.

Все я любив,  
Цілував і постив.

Світу мені не жаль.

Ну і коли вже?  
Коли вже в Гості  
За голубу емаль?..

## Meditation

The silence of the cemetery,  
Sorrow soft as swan's down, night  
The shadow of a hawk,  
A crown, the crown,  
The human root in the jaundiced  
Whisper of a candle.

My passionate muse,  
But what will come of passion  
Even if it sins and sins...  
And you, life,  
Do you heal my spirit  
While my body sleeps?

So my sword like edges  
Are honed with tears,  
I live and die  
By my own volition  
And yet  
I desire judgement.

Everything  
In the world,  
Everything has been acquired,  
Glory, love, ripeness...  
It would be good  
If mother would come and greet us,

And so... an intermission,  
The delight of children,  
I love horses, the river,  
Verse like a cranberry leaf,  
I tear off and leave  
In the sand.

Sugar or salt  
In the waters of my Clepsydra...  
Either way  
The silence of the cemetery  
Seethes  
Soundlessly.  
This sly, sweet death...  
Eternity is just a wing beat.

All that I loved, kissed, cherished,  
I do not regret this world  
And wonder if I will  
When I am the guest  
In the pale  
Enamel  
Photograph on my memorial?

**Steve Komarnyckyj** is a British Ukrainian writer and linguist who has lived and worked for most of his life in his native Yorkshire while maintaining strong links with Ukraine. His literary translations and poems have appeared in Poetry Salzburg Review, Vsesvit magazine (Ukraine's most influential literary journal), The North, the Echo Room and Modern Poetry in Translation. His book of selected translations from the Ukrainian poet Pavlo Tychyna was published by Poetry Salzburg in 2012 and a selection of his own poems is being published with the work of two other authors in the first edition of Fjords journal's 3x3 series. A first collection of his own poetry will be published in 2013. He is the featured poet in the current issue of Envoi

**Ihor Pavlyuk** was born in the Volyn region of Ukraine in January 1967 and studied at the St. Petersburg Military University, which he left in order to pursue his career as a writer. He was, as a result, sentenced to a period of hard labour in the Taiga but continued to write as best he could, driven by a nostalgia for his Ukrainian homeland, until he was liberated by the fall of the Soviet Union. His work is marked by a simplicity of diction and emotional honesty.