

on page 209. This quality attests to the author's thorough knowledge of and lucid insight into Chekhov's works.

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SOBRANIE STIKHOTVORENII. By *Georgii Ivanov*. Edited by *Vsevolod Setchkarev* and *Margaret Dalton*. *Colloquium Slavicum, Beiträge zur Slavistik*, vol. 7. Würzburg: Jal-Verlag, 1975. viii, 367 pp. DM 98, paper.

For the first time over five hundred poems by Georgii Ivanov are gathered in a single volume. All of his published books of verse have been photomechanically reproduced in this edition, as well as a number of poems not included in previous collections. The editors have omitted only those poems which had been reprinted in more than one edition. The use of photomechanical techniques explains the diversity of print types and the concurrent use of the "old" and the "new" orthography in the same book.

Georgii Ivanov's early verse held no promise of genuine poetic value. It fit easily into the framework of Acmeist poetry, proclaimed by Gumilev at the beginning of the century. In 1919, in an essay entitled "Otzyvy o poetakh," Blok wrote the following about Georgii Ivanov's early poems: "Hearing poems such as those collected in the volume 'The Chamber,' one could suddenly start weeping—not for the poems themselves, not for their author—but for our impotence. Because there can be such frightening poems about nothing at all: poems, not devoid of anything—neither talent, nor intelligence, nor taste—and at the same time it is as if these poems did not exist: they are devoid of everything, and nothing can be done about it."

However, that which the prerevolutionary Petrograd atmosphere of aesthetic snobbishness was unable to accomplish, was miraculously accomplished by the tragic fate of an exile. Having lost his country, Georgii Ivanov found his true poetic voice. He felt and expressed in his poems a catastrophe which was both personal and common to all Russians, and he gained a prominent place in mid-twentieth-century Russian poetry. The authenticity of despair, the authenticity of loneliness, the authenticity of approaching death, all came to him in the last fifteen years of his life. Such metamorphoses are extremely rare. In Russian poetry we can probably cite only Maksimilian Voloshin who, during the years of revolutionary terror, was transformed from a subtle poet-aesthete into a wrathful poet-prophet.

The volume's imperfections include a certain editorial carelessness. Annoying misprints, made in earlier editions, have been transferred, uncorrected, into the new edition. A major inaccuracy has been overlooked on page 289, poem number 501—which begins with a quoted line: "They shaved Kikapu for the last time." The footnote to the poem states that the quote is from "a poem by the artist N. K. Churlionis, 1875–1911." No matter who authored this footnote, the scholarly editors should have corrected it or added a footnote of their own: the poem about Kikapu was written by the poet Tikhon Churilin, and in no way is connected with the artist Churlionis.

The process of reinstating émigré writers and their literary rights in the USSR takes place very slowly. Georgii Ivanov's turn has not yet come: he is still on the blacklist. The brief commentary on Ivanov which appears in the *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia* is highly tendentious and does not convey a comprehensive idea of his *oeuvre*.

Even though the statement made by the editors of the present volume ("The poetic work of Georgii Ivanov—without any doubt one of the greatest Russian poets of this century . . .") appears highly debatable, the difficult labor involved in the

collection of Georgii Ivanov's literary heritage and the publishing of his collected poems undoubtedly deserves the attention and approval of literary scholars as well as readers of literature.

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ANNA AKHMATOVA: A POETIC PILGRIMAGE. By *Amanda Haight*. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1976. x, 213 pp. Illus. \$10.00.

PAMIATI ANNY AKHMATOVOI: STIKHI, PIS'MA, VOSPOMINANIA. With "Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoi" by *L. Chukovskaia*. Paris: YMCA-Press, 1974. 221 pp. Paper.

SELECTED POEMS. By *Anna Akhmatova*. Edited and translated by *Walter Arndt*. With "Requiem," translated by *Robin Kemball*, and "A Poem Without a Hero," translated and annotated by *Carl R. Proffer*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1976. xxxvi, 202 pp. Illus. \$3.95, paper.

REQUIEM AND POEM WITHOUT A HERO. By *Anna Akhmatova*. Translated by *D. M. Thomas*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1976. 78 pp.

Until recently, we have known comparatively little about Anna Akhmatova's life, and much of what was written about her was conjecture based on her deceptively intimate lyrics. Amanda Haight's biography, the first in either English or Russian, is, therefore, a major contribution. In 1964, Haight was a young Englishwoman, "with vague plans for a thesis on Akhmatova," who came to enjoy Akhmatova's friendship and confidence in the last years before the poet's death. Akhmatova showed Haight unpublished letters and sent her to visit friends, whose unpublished reminiscences, along with Akhmatova's letters and her own accounts, are essential sources of Haight's book. In a sense, then, this is almost an authorized biography, which gives us Akhmatova's life much as she might have liked us to see it. It contains much new information about Akhmatova's disastrous marriage to Gumilev, her subsequent marriages, and her life during the silent years of the 1920s, 30s, and 40s.

All this information sheds important light on her poetry. But valuable as the book is as a biographical source, it is disappointing as a poetic study. Haight does present some interesting thoughts about Akhmatova's search for lyric heroines who would move her experience beyond the merely particular. She conjures a bit with Nadezhda Mandelstam's tantalizing suggestion that Akhmatova was always seeking her double in others. She recounts the fascinating tale of Akhmatova's 1945 meetings with Isaiah Berlin, and how Akhmatova was convinced they were the cause, not only of Zhdanov's 1946 attacks on her, but of the whole Cold War. But when, at the end of each chapter, Haight confronts the poetry itself, she has little new to say about it, even in light of her biographical contributions.

The collection, *Pamiati Anny Akhmatovoi*, contains some of Akhmatova's poems (most of them previously published), a brief autobiography, two letters (addressee unspecified), and poems in her memory by three young Leningrad poets—most notably Brodsky's magnificent *Sreten'e* (also published elsewhere). But the heart of the book is the excerpt from Lidia Chukovskaia's *Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoi*. Chukovskaia's friendship with Akhmatova and her diary of their meetings began in the purge year of 1938, when they shared the agonizing wait in prison lines for news of Chukovskaia's husband and of Akhmatova's son. The danger of keeping such a diary, even in code, as Chukovskaia did, was incalculable. But the alternative—"to write nothing about her"—was equally unthinkable for Chukovskaia and we should be grateful for her courage and devotion. She describes a typical visit to Akhmatova: "Suddenly, in the