

If the embraceable remains unembraced by the author, hers is nonetheless a useful handbook for the admirers of the Bard. Her translations are plentiful, well selected, and accurate. Her discussion of the genesis of the poet is knowledgeable. The thankless task of explaining the jokes and elucidating the allusions is tackled with resolution and efficiency. In a word, her short, solid monograph will—like Prutkov's turpentine—have its uses.

One crucial question, however, is, I regret to say, nowhere broached by the author. Namely, what conceivable *relevance* can this fustian epigone of bygone years have for Soviet Russians of today? The answer, I am convinced, is that, repeated official denials to the contrary, the dangerous virus of *prutkovshchina* has not only not been stamped out by the authorities, it has infected the Soviet editors of the Bard himself. As proof of this grave accusation I submit the following musicological footnote drawn from the Academy edition of Prutkov: "According to information provided to me by S. L. Ginsburg Frère Jacques is an ancient French song: 'Frère Jacques (bis)/Dormez-vous (bis)/Sonnez la matinée [*sic*] (bis)/Bim-bam-bom! (bis).' Thematically [Frère Jacques] approximates the [Russian] seminary song 'Father Theofil' of which it is apparently a partial reworking, partial translation" (p. 567). *Bdite!nost', tovarishchi, bdite!nost'!*

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SELECTED POEMS. By *Alexander Blok*. Introduced and edited by *Avril Pyman*.

Illustrated by *Kirill Sokolov*. New York and Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1972. xix, 366 pp. \$11.50.

Ms. Pyman's book is a welcome addition to the all-too-small number of annotated Russian poetry texts published in the West and likely therefore to be available for several years at a stretch for use in the classroom. It contains a hundred lyrics, *Dvenadtsat', Skify*, an extract from *Vozmezdie*, and a short prose passage, thus providing a selection twice as large as that in James Woodward's teaching text (Oxford, 1968), though smaller than the collection published in the same year by "Khudozhestvennaia literatura," which is another stand-by for courses in Russian poetry. In addition to the poems there are fifty-three pages of introduction, ninety-five pages of notes, and an extensive bibliography covering, besides Russian works, publications on Blok and translations in English, French, German, and Italian; this is in part a reprint of material published by Ms. Pyman in the first Tartu *Blokovskii sbornik* in 1964.

The selection is a good one, ranging from interesting juvenilia to the poetry of Blok's maturity. Virtually every aspect of Blok's poetry is represented except his translations, and this is a pity, for they are by no means simply an appendage to the main body of his work, and form part of a tradition of verse translation that is a significant part of the achievement of Russia's poets. The introduction is "an attempt . . . to write briefly about Blok's poetry in the context of his life and times." On the whole it succeeds admirably, combining information drawn often from the less obvious sources with a lively presentation of the basic biographical material, and betraying a shrewd and sympathetic understanding of Blok as man and writer, although Ms. Pyman relies too unreservedly on some of Blok's observations about the intellectual climate of his time which are more or less deliberate and highly colored exaggerations, dramatizations of his characteristically emotive

reaction to the metaphysical profundities of some of his contemporaries. The annotations aim "to make available in English much material contained in the nine-volume Soviet *Collected works*," supplemented from other sources. They are extensive, and will be found immensely helpful by the newcomer to Blok.

A couple of dozen well-chosen illustrations enhance the value of the book for the Western student. In particular, the photographs of the poet's childhood surroundings will help the reader to visualize the half-real landscape of Blok's earlier poetic dreams, and Kirill Sokolov's crisp vignettes convey perfectly the unique typographical flavor of contemporary Symbolist publications. The over-long delay in publication has slightly reduced the value of the bibliography. The apologetic addenda cover the period from 1963 to 1968, but there are some puzzling omissions, and some important work on Blok has appeared since 1968. One serious editorial lapse detracts slightly from the usefulness of this otherwise exceptionally well-produced volume: far too many misprints have escaped detection. This is no quibble. Trivial errors in the spelling and punctuation of the introduction merely irritate, but misspelled names and garbled Greek may mislead the exploring student, who can even less be expected to take in his stride misprints in the Russian text of a poem. The editor of a volume that is destined to be a teaching aid surely has a particular duty to provide a text free of traps for the unwary.

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A STUDY OF VASYL' STEFANYK: THE PAIN AT THE HEART OF EXISTENCE. By *D. S. Struk*. Foreword by *G. S. N. Luckyj*. Littleton, Colo.: Ukrainian Academic Press, a Division of Libraries Unlimited, 1973. 200 pp. \$8.50.

D. S. Struk's monograph on Vasyl Stefanyk, the foremost Ukrainian prose writer, is a critical confrontation of the oversimplified and tendentious views on Stefanyk which classify him as either a typical nineteenth-century populist writer or a writer about social injustice, as well as a survey of the views of those critics who have recognized in Stefanyk an author of universal appeal and significance. Since those who hold the latter opinion have failed to corroborate their insights, Struk's main purpose in this study is to provide supporting documentation for Stefanyk's universality as a writer whose prime concern was the portrayal of human pain and anguish, using as his subject the Ukrainian peasant.

In attempting to present the essence of Stefanyk's creative concern, Struk analyzes and divides Stefanyk's themes of pain and suffering into six basic conditions—poverty, loss, old age, death, inescapable situations, and impossible choice. Struk also undertakes to examine and evaluate the artistic features of Stefanyk's style which show him to be a master of the novella genre. Each chapter of the monograph has been well-researched, richly annotated, and presented in a lucid, well-organized manner. At times, however, the author seems to explain the obvious. Appended to the study is also a selection and English translation of thirteen of Stefanyk's novellas, which will amplify the already existing translations of Stefanyk in most of the major languages.

Since a good critical evaluation of Stefanyk's work has been lacking, the present study is a welcome contribution as the first comprehensive work on Stefanyk not