

## THE UNIVERSE OF MY VOICE

by Bilal Laypanov

### Comments

Poetry is a kind of art which is maybe the most dependent on its material, the phonemic organization of the language. This live sound, this atmosphere of the language cannot be reproduced in the best translation ever possible. That is why I don't like the word "translation" and prefer to speak of the interpretation of a person's poetry by another person, sometime in another language. Well, even reading verse in one's native language, doesn't one have to translate it into one's own internal language of unique individual variations of sense and feelings? Is it very different from transferring poetry to the world of a different language, or from an artistic interpretation of poetry by the means of the other arts?

These pages present my interpretation of just a few poems by a Karachai poet Bilal Laypanov. Of his many hundreds of lines, I have chosen those that are nearer to my own attitude to the world—this is what I could maybe have said myself sometime. The reader can notice that the verse collected here is never ethnically colored—it might as well be written in any other language of the Earth, or even in the language of an extraterrestrial dweller. I do not present Bilal Laypanov as *a Karachai*, but rather as *a poet* who brings the great universality of the art to all the people.

For comparison, the translations into Russian by an excellent professional interpreter Arcady Tyurin (late) are presented as well. Of course, neither Russian, nor English translation do not convey the phonemic organization of the original—but I hope that these interpretations do reflect its peculiar imagery, and thereby the distinctive features of Bilal Laypanov's way of thought and his personal vision of the world. Thus the universe of Bilal Laypanov's voice becomes open for the millions of readers in Russian and English, beside those reading in the languages cognate to Karachai. As for me, I just tried to be a poet first of all, and to give birth to the self-contained English-sounding poems, which might be thought of as originally written in English and made a part of the English native poetry before they found their expression in Karachai. Now, let the reader judge whether I have succeeded in that.

*Meräilih*

\* \* \*

Poetry  
is a lake  
with the open eyes.  
With my heart,  
I drink  
its reflections,  
with my palm,  
I draw  
my face  
out of its depth.  
Nobody knows  
how large the lake is,  
but, when I sing,  
the fires go up  
on the opposite side.  
I am no god,  
to walk over waters  
to get there.  
But my life is enough  
to measure  
the universe of my voice.  
And then  
I will be  
a lake  
with the open eyes...

#### Ways of salvation

One could escape  
digging into the earth.  
But one could just learn to fly.

\* \* \*

The poet grows  
from under the earth,  
like a tree.  
After the death,  
I will be a maple  
hailing the ships  
of the clouds,  
wondering at the lightning,  
enjoying the wings  
cutting  
the crystalline heights,  
with my boughs cradling  
the stars—  
I will fall like the tears of dew,  
sail through the wind

\* \* \*

Поэзия — озеро,  
Открывшее глаза.  
Сердцем пью из него  
Отражения,  
Ладонью черпаю  
Свое лицо  
Из глубины.  
Велико ли озеро,  
Не знаю,  
Но, когда пою,  
На другом берегу  
Огни загораются.  
Может, я не пророк,  
Чтобы перейти его  
Посуху,  
Но за всю жизнь  
Обойду без посоха  
Пространство моего  
Голоса.  
А там — стану  
Озером, открывшим  
глаза...

#### Пути к спасению

Можно спастись,  
Зарывшись в землю,  
А можно научиться летать...

\* \* \*

Поэт растет  
Из земли, словно дерево;  
И после смерти  
Стану топодем  
Встречать корабли  
Облаков,  
Удивляться молниям,  
Радоваться крыльям,  
Рассекающим  
Хрустальную высь,  
Качать на ветвях  
Звезды...  
Осыпаться слезами росы,  
Плыть сквозь ветер  
В то небо,

into the sky  
with the centuries-old flight of  
the human gaze,  
into the infinite sky,  
the everlasting sky.

\* \* \*

You love  
to look in the stars—  
I drink the sky  
from your eyes.

\* \* \*

The poet's epitaph:  
The stars  
have drunk all of his soul.

\* \* \*

Never mind the years passing by.  
Let them follow their destined way.  
In the end, recollecting your life,  
Love it all, with its ultimate day.  
No one asked if you wanted to come.  
No one cares when you are ready to part.  
No eternity has ever become,  
No eternally pulsating heart.  
The day will burn down into the night,  
Tired of the vanities of the world.  
Come with it, close the door behind,  
Leaving the flowers on the threshold.

### **The fallen beauty**

The heavens gleaming in the pools of dirt...

\* \* \*

Night—and his fingers black,  
touching your skin so white...  
Sleepless I'm lying on my back,  
Passion obscures the sight.  
Clenching my feelings tight—  
but, after everything,  
Day—and his hands of light  
over your marble skin!  
Flower caressed by the sun,  
melt in the dark embrace—  
I am your only one  
Mad of that jealous chase.

Куда веками летел  
Человеческий взгляд, —  
В бесконечное небо,  
В бессмертное небо...

\* \* \*

Ты любишь  
Смотреть в звезды...  
Пью небо  
Из твоих глаз.

\* \* \*

Надпись на надгробии поэта:  
«Звезды  
Выпили его душу».

\* \* \*

Не считай уходящие дни —  
Все свершится в положенный срок.  
Ты и смерть, как сестру, полюби,  
Ведь она — твоей жизни итог.  
Не спросясь, ты родился на свет.  
Не спросясь, тебя смерть унесет.  
В этом мире бессмертия нет,  
За приходом быть должен уход.  
И, устав от мирской суеты,  
Тихо день догорит за спиной...  
На пороге оставив цветы,  
Молча дверь затвори за собой.

### **Падшая красота**

Обломки неба в грязных лужах...

\* \* \*

Черные пальцы ночи  
По белым твоим плечам...  
Страсть застилает мне очи,  
Спать не дает по ночам!  
И утром — ревности муки,  
Вновь мне покоя нет —  
Кладет свои белые руки  
На плечи твои рассвет!  
То солнце тебя ласкает,  
То обнимает тьма...  
Просто любовь такая  
Сводит меня с ума!

*About the author*

Bilal Laypanov (Laipanlari Bilal).

Born in 1955. After graduating from the M. Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow, worked as a journalist, high-school teacher, scientist (humanities). Published many books of poetry, including Collected Poems in 10 volumes. Three volumes of Russian translations appeared in 1993 and were later nominated for a State Prize of Russian Federation.