

THE POETRY OF NATALIA ELIZAROVA IN TRANSLATION

A THESIS

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By

Sarah Ingrid Sundstrom

Alexei Pavlenko, Advisor

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Introduction

For my thesis I have decided to translate the poetry of Natalia Elizarova, a contemporary Russian poet, into English. I have included an analysis of her poetry as well as an explanation of my translations and my method of translating. To give some background, I have written on various theories of translation and how I have come to a conclusion on my own method through analysis of different theories. I have specifically analyzed various theories of translation as applied to *Eugene Onegin*, the masterwork of the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.

Natalia Elizarova's poems are not only beautiful in their feeling and form, but in their content: their metaphors, emotions, images, and ideas. Her work gives insight into what is like to be a woman in Russia today. *Eugene Onegin*, like the poetry of Natalia Elizarova, focuses on the themes of love, history, Russia, and what it means to be Russian. In my analysis of various theories of translation, and specifically in regard to their application to *Eugene Onegin*, I have come to a deeper understanding of what I believe is the purpose and correct method of translation. Applying this to Natalia Elizarova's poetry, I have hopefully created translations that speak to their meaning and feeling, in a way that is accessible to the English reader without being unfaithful to the original.

Translation Theory and *Eugene Onegin*

Translation has been a cornerstone of human intellectualism since the time of antiquity. Starting with the first translations of the Bible, translations have been bridging the linguistic gap between cultures and people who would never otherwise have been in communication. Translations have taught us the history of the world, and made it possible for us to tell our stories to future generations. Even with all that is so great about translation, it is still fraught with its own troubles. In the 19th century, the problematic nature of translation had become all too apparent. The question of whether to render more faithfully the form or the content of an original work led to the emergence of two very different approaches in theory. The traditional style of translation was in the French tradition, as French was considered to be the most respected literary language at the time. This approach was characterized by the domestication and appropriation of foreign works (Weissbort 195). In contrast to the French method was the German method, led by some of the most important 19th century German Romantic theorists, which was a foreignizing and more literal style of translation. In Britain, some translators chose the French “loose” style while others preferred the German “close” method. These competing styles were cause for strong disagreement and debate on the correct method of translation during the 19th century, and they continue to be a topic much argued about to this day.

The German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher was one of the most important scholars on the side of the German tradition. He wrote that there are two possibilities for translation: “either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him” (Weissbort 207). These two approaches reflect the

German and the French methods, respectively. In the French view, the text needs to be domesticated and familiarized to the point where it seems that the author of the original has been changed into someone who is contemporary and native to the time and place of the translation (Weissbort 208). The view that Schleiermacher himself believed is that the translator needs to bring the reader towards his or her own point of view, which is mostly foreign to them (Weissbort 208).

In order to show the two extremes on this spectrum of theory, I will use the example of three very different translations of Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. This 1825 novel in verse has been widely considered to be the masterpiece of Russian literature, just as Pushkin is considered by many to be the ultimate Russian poet. I chose this example because of the varied methods of translation that have been applied to it, resulting in much debate between translators. Additionally, this novel is primarily a love poem, like much of the poetry of Natalia Elizarova. I will be looking specifically at the translations of the work by Vladimir Nabokov and by James E. Falen, as well as Walter W. Arndt.

Vladimir Nabokov, the famed bilingual novelist and author of *Lolita*, had strong opinions on the correct form of translation. He taught Russian and English literature in translation, which made him more drawn to literalism because of its scholarly and educational nature, as opposed to a more exciting or entertaining approach (Weissbort 378). He believed that a capable reader should be prepared to delve into the text, taking a "Schleiermachian journey" into an unknown world and meet the author or translator in the middle, at the very least (Weissbort 379). Walter W. Arndt, a translator and scholar of German descent, chose a much more domesticating style in his translation of Pushkin's

work, keeping its characteristic rhyme and meter. James E. Falen, also a translator and professor of Russian, holds a very different idea about the correct approach a translator should take. His style is more of an in between; he hoped to create a translation that would read comfortably and delight the reader just as the original does.

Falen's ideas in translating *Eugene Onegin* rested in his quest to provide modern English-speaking readers with "a more accessible version of one of the great works of the Russian literary imagination, one that would speak in a familiar, not-too-distant English voice" (Falen xxviii). In his introduction to his translation of *Eugene Onegin*, he writes on the importance of this fluidity in his work:

I have found myself searching for an ever more natural and unforced flow of language, for a more fluid and straightforward syntax, a lighter and more readily comprehensible style; I have tried to avoid as much as possible the sorts of inversions and verbal contortions that have marred in my view the earlier translation—all in an effort to capture what seemed to me the poem's spontaneous and unlaboured effect in Pushkin's Russian. (Falen xxvii)

Indeed, Falen's translation proved to be the most easily readable translation of Pushkin's work, while still capturing the feeling of the original.

Nabokov was infuriated by this style of translation. He wrote extensively about his ideas on fluency and exactness in translation. Nabokov stressed the importance of dismissing the conventional idea that a translation should not sound like a translation, and instead should be smooth and easy to read (Weissbort 382). In fact, he firmly believed that any translation that doesn't sound like a translation is undoubtedly imprecise and unfaithful to the original (Weissbort 382). Nabokov believed that reviewers praise

‘readable’ translations “because the drudge of the rhymester has substituted easy platitudes for the breathtaking intricacies of the text” (Weissbort 383). Nabokov maintained that a translator’s one duty is to reproduce the entire text and nothing more, with absolute fidelity (Weissbort 384). He considered completeness and faithfulness to be the only important aspects of a good translation (Weissbort 382). According to him, “The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase” (Weissbort 383).

Falen, on the contrary, found that creating the feeling of the original in the translation was vital to his work. He strove to create a work that not only shows the sense and structure of the novel, but also something of its “characteristic flavour”, “its verve and sparkle, its lyricism and wit, its succinctness and variety” (Falen xxviii). He wanted to create the same feeling as the original, to bring out and honor its spirit.

Nabokov claimed that a translator slanders the author when he/she attempts to bring out the spirit of the original, rather than its textual sense, in a translation (Weissbort 383). He wrote that a translator needs as much talent as the author, or at least the same kind of talent (Weissbort 380). Yet, he says that the more talented the translator is, the more likely he or she will be to “drown the foreign masterpiece under the sparkling ripples of his own personal style” (Weissbort 380). To him, the worst evil in the world of translation is “when a masterpiece is planished and patted into such a shape, vilely beautified in such a fashion as to conform to the notions and prejudices of a given public” (Weissbort 380). His intense language shows his serious regard for the original and its author, and his strong views that they should not be molded into something different altogether. Even Falen himself addresses this worry, writing that “there are occasions

when the translator, however carefully he tries to grip his own mirror by its edges so as not to smudge the glass, will inadvertently allow his hands to enter the picture and thus obscure the view” (Falen xxv).

In Nabokov’s essay on the translation of *Onegin*, he grappled with the question of whether a translation can keep the same form, rhythm and rhyme of the original, while still remaining absolutely faithful to the text (Weissbort 384). Falen’s conclusion about this was a definitive yes. He preserved the *Onegin* stanza in his work, citing it as one of the most “essential and characteristic” aspects of the novel, calling it “the building-block with which the entire edifice is constructed” (Falen xxvii). He considered the constraint of this complex rhyme scheme to be a useful structure, allowing him to “to seek solutions without self-indulgence, to find variety within oneness, and to earn freedom within the bondage of the form” just like Pushkin had (Falen xxvii). Falen additionally attempted to adapt the rhythms of the poem to the rhythms of English speech. Aside from the structure, Falen considered the rhyme in *Onegin* to be vital to the feeling of the work. In Pushkin’s masterpiece, “all the expressive resources of the Russian language are on masterful display” and “the sheer beauty of sound is so vital a part of its effect” (Falen xxv).

Nabokov felt very differently about this aspect of translation as well. He believed that it was impossible to translate the work in rhyme, and instead decided that the best option was to use extensive footnotes to describe the rhymes and modulations of the text, along with its other features and associations. He eventually decided to translate the work by substituting the fourteen rhymed tetrameter lines of each stanza with fourteen unrhymed lines of varying length, from iambic dimeter to iambic pentameter,

additionally trying to match the syllabic rhythm of the Russian (Weissbort 384).

Although, he later admitted to giving up on retaining this iambic rhythm wherever it interfered with loyalty to the text (Weissbort 386).

In his *Note on the Translation of Eugene Onegin*, Falen directly addressed Nabokov's approach. He wrote that when Nabokov disposed of metre and rhyme in his translation of *Onegin*, he created a version "at once marvellously accurate and rather peculiar," with most of its poetry present not in the actual translation, but in the accompanying commentary (Falen xxvi). To this end, Falen claims that "Pushkin, one has to say, loses where Nabokov gains" (Falen xxvi).

Because Falen's translation arrived well after the death of Nabokov, Nabokov did not have a chance to critique his version. Much of Nabokov's anger about these issues is shown in his critique of Walter W. Arndt's 1963 translation of *Onegin*. In his 1964 article *On Translating Pushkin Pounding the Clavichord*, Nabokov called Arndt's translation a "pitiless and irresponsible" "patchy" paraphrase. He criticized Arndt's use of his own tropes in the place of Pushkin's, saying that "figure of speech is the main, sacred quiddity and eyespot of a poet's genius, and is the last thing that should be tampered with" (Nabokov). Nabokov also called into issue a statement made by Arndt in the preface of his book addressing the audience he hopes to reach:

"The present new translation... is not aimed primarily at the academic and literary expert, but at a public of English-speaking students and others interested in a central work of world literature in a compact and readable form"—which is tantamount to proclaiming: "I know this is an inferior product but it is gaily

colored and nicely packaged, and is, anyway, just for students and such people.”

(Nabokov)

To Nabokov, Arndt did not seem to care at all about the original text, and was extremely disloyal to it.

The 20th century translator, theorist, and historian Andre Lefevere shared similar ideas about fidelity to the original. He wrote extensively on the need for translators to work as technicians, with the aim of making literature from other systems available for analysis rather than just enjoyment, calling for a “descriptive” rather than an “interpretive” style of translation (Weissbort 442). This is because systems of literature are generalized based only on works that are most well known from a particular culture. Additionally, most of these generalizations have been based in the past on a specific historical phase of Eurocentric poetics (Weissbort 441). Literary historians rely on translations to know what a work is like because they don’t know the original language, and these translations have the power to “make or break” the reputation of a writer and/or a work in the sphere of the target culture (Weissbort 438). The need for less interpretive translations is important according to Lefevere because “nobody is ever able to escape from the ideology and/or the poetics prevalent in the literary system of his or her own time” (Weissbort 442).

The current translator, theorist, author and educator Lawrence Venuti takes an even stronger stance on the issue, although one that is quite similar to Nabokov’s. He likens any form of translation to violence, because of its domesticating tendencies:

The aim of translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar; and this aim always risks a wholesale

domestication of the foreign text, often in highly self-conscious projects, where translation serves an imperial appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic agendas, cultural, economic, political. (Weissbort 547)

He says that fluency is a discursive trick used by the translator to domesticate the text, ridding it of its foreignness and “making it intelligible in an English-language culture that values easy readability, transparent discourse, and the illusion of authorial presence” (Weissbort 551). Fluency hides the fact that it contains the translator’s interpretation, so people believe that it has the same meaning as the original because it conforms to the values of the target language: not only the glorification of “unconstrained” language, but also the predominant understanding of the foreign work or literature in the receiving culture (Weissbort 552).

Yet, to Falen, even the basic idea of literalness has to be brought into question. Falen responds to Nabokov’s insistence on literal translation by disproving Nabokov’s idea about what “literal” really means:

And of course a “literal” version is, in the end, no less unfaithful to its model than a rhymed and metred one: in place of a work whose austere and harmonious shape is an essential part of its effect, it gives us something ill-proportioned and flaccid, a kind of “formal paraphrase” that seems bland and inert where the original is expressive and alive. (Falen xxvi)

Walter Benjamin, a 20th century German-Jewish essayist and cultural and literary critic, also stressed the idea that literalness cannot preserve the sense or significance of a work:

Fidelity in the rendering of individual words can almost never carry over fully the sense they have in the original. For this sense is not exhausted, in its creative

significance for the original, in what is meant; rather, it acquires this significance precisely as *what* is meant is bound, in the specific word, to the *manner* of meaning... In particular, literalness in regard to syntax destroys any rendering of sense whatever and is in danger of becoming unintelligible. (Weissbort 304)

To him, the goal is not to have the translation read like an original, and the translator must let go of the original to an extent to let the translation create its own intention, and continue the life of the original (Weissbort 304).

Indeed, after Nabokov's *Onegin* translation was released, some saw him as "a writer who talked of aesthetic bliss while giving short shrift to the creator of the "greatest poem in the Russian language"" (Weissbort 388). In the introduction to Nabokov's translation of *Eugene Onegin*, Nabokov himself addresses his sacrifices when translating the work:

In transposing *Eugene Onegin* from Pushkin's Russian into my English I have sacrificed to completeness of meaning every formal element including the iambic rhythm, whenever its retention hindered fidelity. To my ideal of literalism I sacrificed everything (elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage, and even grammar) that the dainty mimic prizes higher than truth. (Weissbort 386)

Falen also took issue with Nabokov's separation of form and content. He wrote that the translator's choice is not between staying faithful to either form or meaning, because even separately, achieving either of these goals is impossible (Falen xxvi). This is because when a work is translated from one language to another there are never any exact matches between words, whether it is in their meanings, forms, effects, or histories (Falen xxvi). According to Falen, "this very tendency of ours to divide a work of art into

separate categories of form and content not only gives a false view of a work's complex nature but also poses the problem of literary translation in a false light" (Falen xxvi).

Although his translation of *Onegin* was not well received, Nabokov was praised by many for his meticulous historical analysis and many footnotes, which show the intertextual links between *Onegin* and European writing, and illustrate how often Pushkin depended on sources from other languages (Weissbort 388). Even Falen wrote of Nabokov that his work "was a constant challenge to strive for greater accuracy, and his extensive commentary on the novel was an endless source of both instruction and pleasure" (Falen xxix).

Both Lefevere and Venuti would have applauded Nabokov's translation for his literalness and fidelity to the text. Nabokov, working as a "technician", endeavored against the domesticating approaches of other translators. Arndt's translation may well be domesticating and Germanizing the poem to a point where it does not closely resemble the original, and is imbuing it with his own values and sensitivities. Yet, I cannot truly say that I think his translation was attempting to serve some "violent" agenda, cultural, political, economic, or otherwise. And I certainly would not say that about Falen's translation. While these arguments make sense in the wide arena of translation in general, they seem to be hitting at something more sinister and deeply ingrained in Western culture. Both Lefevere and Venuti seem to be standing up for the less well known literary cultures, which are generalized based on Eurocentric views. They are striving for an end to imperialist, ethnocentric, racist, and culturally narcissistic tendencies in translations of languages lesser known to Western English speaking cultures (Weissbort 556). While I believe their resistance to these harmful trends is quite important, I do not think it applies

as directly to the world of Russian literature, because of the scope and breadth of translations that are available in English today, many of which I believe are quite faithful to the original. Even if we could apply these narratives of domestication as violence to the world of Russian literature in general, I do not think that the translations of *Eugene Onegin* by Falen or Arndt themselves purposefully or unknowingly convey violent or sinister messages which could lead to serious misrepresentation of Russian culture, and certainly not global conflict or warfare.

I would like to add my own analysis of the Nabokov, Arndt, and Falen translations of one stanza of the poem (Six: XXXVI-XXXVII) (36-37). The italicized words in the Arndt translation are, according to Nabokov, those “verbal gobbets” which are either found in a different form or not found at all in Pushkin’s original text. Nabokov also added that the omissions and errors throughout this section, and throughout Arndt’s entire translation, are so numerous and deeply rooted in the text that they could not be effectively listed (Nabokov). I have also included a linear translation for comparison.

XXXVI

Друзья мои, вам жаль поэта:
 Во цвете радостных надежд,
 Их не свершив еще для света,
 Чуть из младенческих одежд,
 Увял! Где жаркое волнение,
 Где благородное стремление
 И чувств и мыслей молодых,

Высоких, нежных, удалых?
 Где бурные любви желанья,
 И жажда знаний и труда,
 И страх порока и стыда,
 И вы, заветные мечтанья,
 Вы, призрак жизни неземной,
 Вы, сны поэзии святой!

(Alexander Pushkin)

XXXVI

Friends (of) mine, you pity (the) poet:
 In (the) bloom (of) joyful hope,
 They (are) not accomplished still for (the) world,
 Just from infant's clothes,
 Withered! Where (is the) hot agitation,
 Where (is the) noble aspiration,
 And feelings and thoughts (of the) young,
 High, tender, daring?
 Where (is the) turbulent (of) love desire,
 And thirst (for) knowledge and labor,
 And fear (of) vice and shame,
 And you, cherished dreams,
 You, apparition (of) life ethereal,
 You, dream poetry holy!

(Linear Translation)

XXXVI

My friends, you're sorry for the poet:
in the bloom of glad hopes,
not having yet fulfilled them for the world,
scarce out of infant clothes,
Withered! Where is the ardent stir,
the noble aspiration,
of young emotions and young thoughts,
exalted, tender, bold?
Where are love's turbulent desires,
the thirst for knowledge and work,
the dread of vice and shame,
and you, fond musings,
you, token of unearthly life,
you, dreams of sacred poetry!

(Vladimir Nabokov)

XXXVI

My friends, you will lament the poet
Who, flowering *with a happy gift*,
Must wilt before he could bestow it

Upon the world, *yet scarce adrift*
From boyhood's shore. Now he will never
 Seethe with that generous endeavor,
 Those *storms* of mind and heart again,
 Audacious, tender or *humane!*
 Stilled now are love's unruly urges,
 the thirst for knowledge and for *deeds*,
Contempt for vice and *what it breeds*,
 And stilled you too, ethereal surges
 Breath of a transcendental clime,
 Dreams from the sacred realm of rhyme.

(Walter Arndt)

36

You mourn the poet, friends . . . and rightly:
 Scarce out of infant clothes and killed!
 Those joyous hopes that bloomed so brightly
 Now doomed to wither unfulfilled!
 Where now the ardent agitation,
 The fine and noble aspiration
 Of youthful feeling, youthful thought,
 Exalted, tender, boldly wrought?
 And where are stormy love's desires,

The thirst for knowledge, work, and fame,
 The dread of vice, the fear of shame?
 And where are you, poetic fires,
 You cherished dreams of sacred worth
 And pledge of life beyond this earth!

(James E. Falen)

Nabokov's criticism is quite apparent in Arndt's lines "Upon the world, yet scarce adrift / From boyhood's shore" (Arndt 4-5). In this case, he added in his own metaphor, which was not present in the original Russian. This clearly changes the poem in a way that makes it more of the translator's words than the author's. In my translations I kept Natalia Elizarova's metaphors and idioms as much as possible, in order to not mold the poems into creations out of my own imagination. Yet, I cannot say that Nabokov's "literal" translation is much better than Arndt's. While Nabokov's translation is most closely faithful to the original text, it has lost the beauty and life that Falen and Arndt's translations retain in their adherence to Pushkin's original rhyme and metre. The rhyme scheme that Pushkin used in his novel does not only add to its beauty and grace, but it symbolizes and mirrors many important themes throughout the work, e.g. freedom versus convention. In my opinion, Falen's stanza is most faithful to the original in the complete sense. It does not veer too far from the original words and meanings, while still retaining the rhyme and rhythm that was so integral to the original work.

In the end, my method of translating Natalia Elizarova's poetry was informed greatly by the ideas of these differing approaches. I agree with the importance Nabokov

placed on staying true to the original, yet I understand that there is really no such thing as a “literal” translation, especially in the world of poetry. Poetry in its essence is about rhythm, rhyme, sound, associations, and structure. The literal meanings of the words in a poem play a role that is shared with the rest of these aspects. A strictly literal translation of a poem can rid it completely of the meaning that is entrenched in its form and feeling.

Additionally, while I would never want to let the reader be tricked into forgetting that they are reading a translation, I would also not want them to find the translation dull or utterly confusing. Both the domesticating and foreignizing strategies can result in a bad impression or wrong interpretation of the original. This is why I find more truth in a mixed approach. Falen wrote about the particularly challenging aspects of translating poetry, “the verbal art most closely tied to its native language and the most susceptible to distortion in the transfer to another” (Falen xxv). These issues are particularly present in translating from Russian to English, because of the dissimilarity of the two languages:

Confronted with an evident inability to render a work faithfully in either its absolute form or its total sense, the translator, it would seem, faces an impossible task and is condemned by the very nature of his enterprise to an act of compromise and betrayal. The only solution, it seems to me, is for the translator to try to view the work not as a hopeless dichotomy but as a unified whole and to try to be faithful, in some mysterious spirit, to this vision of wholeness. (Falen xxvi)

I find that this quote addresses the troubles of translation particularly well, and the solution posed seems to strike a good balance between the domesticating and foreignizing approaches. I think this idea is also shown by Schleiermacher’s statement that a good

translator should attempt to communicate the same image or impression to the readers that the translator has derived from the work (Weissbort 208). I would also add the opinion of Walter Benjamin, that, in both the original and the translation, “one thing, in fact the same thing, is meant—something, however, that cannot be attained by any one language alone, but only by the totality of their mutually supplementary intentions” (Weissbort 301). Benjamin argued attaining a perfect copy of the original should not be seen as the ultimate goal in a translation. Rather, the translation should add something itself, which, paired with the original, could lead to a new and deeper understanding of both the original and translation. I agree with this idea that the translator’s job is not to merely copy, but to create a work that can make the original come alive even more, yet remaining faithful to it. Both the original and translation should speak to the same ideas. Together, they can reach towards an even truer idea of what is meant. Only then can the life of the original continue on through translations into the future.

Biography of Natalia Elizarova

Natalia Mikhailovna Antonyuk (pen name: Natalia Elizarova) was born in the town of Kashira outside of Moscow, Russia in 1981. She has been writing poetry since she was twelve, and has been published since she was fifteen. She has a degree in Philology from the Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow, as well as degree in Law. At a seminar in Peredelkino in 2006 she was accepted by Rimma Kazakova, a famous Soviet poet and songwriter, into the Union of Writers of Moscow. She has participated in international poetry festivals at the estate Astafyevo in the Moscow Region, and in the cities of Tver, Kazan, Irkutsk (Festival on the Baikal), as well as in Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Romania, Poland, and Germany. She was also a participant at the Forum of Young Writers in Lipki. Natalia Elizarova wrote the text of the Hymn of the Night Hockey League, which was played in May 2013 at the festival in Sochi at a gala-match with the participation of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin. Her poems and short stories have been published in many journals around Russia, including «Урал» «Ural», «Day and Night» «День и ночь», «Zinziver» «Зинзивер», «Neva» «Нева», «Belski Vistas» «Бельские просторы», «Youth» «Юность», «Idel» «Идель», and more. Her works have been translated into Serbian, German, Polish, Romanian, and Hungarian. She is also the author of the poetry collections «Shard of Sleep» «Осколок сна» (2006) and «Hell» «Черта» (2014) (Сидоров).

Interview with Tatiana Nikolskaya

The following is a translation of an interview with Tatiana Nikolskaya, Natalia Elizarova's good friend and former professor from the Gorky Literary Institute:

- What was your first impression of Natalia Elizarova and how has it changed over time?

When I met Natalia Elizarova, she was my student, and I admired her work ethic. She always wanted to work, she never had enough assignments, and she always wanted to do more. She ended up coming to me often, and we worked individually, studying the Russian language. She knows the Russian language very well, and is very good at grammar, but she studied at the Correspondence Department, meaning she already had an education as a lawyer. But she wrote poems from a young age, and so she decided to enroll in our university. When she started studying, she realized that she didn't adequately know Russian Language, she had some things to work on, and that's how we started meeting with each other. But, later these meetings turned into a friendship. At first, we met and talked about Russian language, and then we just started talking about life. That is how our relationship has changed, to the point where I know her now as a person, and I can say we are very close. I know her of course better than at first, and I can still say that she's a workaholic. She has an analytical mind, which is strange, she's a poet, and we might think that she must be very romantic, and she is not at all. She is not a romantic person, she has a very mathematical mentality, and she understands very well and thinks logically. That was very surprising to me, because on one hand she writes

poetry, but on the other hand her writing is very correct and clearly laid out. She is a very honest person, she always tells the truth, and never deceives. This is also interesting, because she is a very imaginative person on one hand, yet on the other hand she is very realistic.

- How has your impression of her work and poetry changed over time?

I think that I've known her already for eight years, and she has started writing differently. Her first collection of poetry was very childlike, although she was not a child when it was published. When it came out she was already around twenty-five years old, I'm not sure, but it was a very unprofessional collection of poetry. Of course, all poems were about love, about how she loves someone; I'm not sure whom. There was nothing original in these poems. They were typical poems of a young woman, who didn't know how to write. And while she was studying at the institute, she grew up a lot in her poetic attitudes. First of all, she wrote on different themes. Already here poems were not just about love, she had many about her hometown, about people. She has portrait poems, where she writes about her aunt, her grandma, her mom, or some neighbor, they are just poetic portraits. I could call many of her poems philosophical poems. She writes about life in general, and of course any woman wants love, but she learned to write poems about life without love, and it isn't bad. It's good when you can look at life, not only with the point of view of does or doesn't this person love me. When you can write about your love, about how you love life, about what you think about god, for example. I think that she has become simply an adult, and a professional poet. And the language in her poems

has also changed. Her writing is complicated. Her poems are not simple, and I like this because it differentiates her from the millions of other poets. She uses complex images and a complex vocabulary, and it makes her poems beautiful. I've also noticed that she is a kinesthetic person, a person who thinks in movement. Before it was not apparent at all in her poems. I think this was because her first poems were derivative. She imitated different poets. And now, she is her own. Therefore, she is a kinesthetic person, and there is a lot of movement in her poems

- What are some of Natalia Elizarova's interests other than writing poetry?

Like I already said, she is a lawyer and works consumes much of her time, therefore I will talk about interests other than poetry and her job. She has a son, he is now 11 years old, and she spends a lot of time with him. They go on trips, she drives him around to different places all the time. She loves music, and she sings well and loves to sing. She plays the guitar, not very well, but a little. She loves books, not just reading them, but books as things. If she sees any beautiful book, even if she already has the book with a different cover, she must buy it because she loves beautiful books. Not too long ago she got a dog. He is a large dog, an African Ridgeback, and now she has a new hobby. She is occupied with the dog, because she has to be occupied with her, she is huge and very strong. And now she has to take care of both her son and her dog. She loves to go on walks. She really loves traveling. She drives a car very well, and she drives to different towns all over Russia, far away. And she flies to different countries. She really loves to discover new places.

- What authors or poets shaped her work the most?

There are some contemporary poets with whom she is very close. They are Kovalgi and Elena Isayeva. Elena Isayeva was her teacher. When Natalia Elizarova was still a teenager, she studied at the literary studio of Elena Isayeva. She is a very notable figure in Russian poetry and drama. I think that these two people, they were her teachers. If we are speaking about classical literature, then she knows Anna Akhmatova very well, she knows her much of her work by heart and loves her. I think that Akhmatova of course influenced Natalia. If we are speaking about even earlier poets, Alexander Blok also influenced her.

- In your opinion, how is Natalia Elizarova perceived in Russia? How well known is she?

If people love poetry, then I think many of them know her name. She has published many poetic collections. Not long ago her poems were published in the journal Youth (Юность), a very famous journal. Literary newspapers not long ago printed her poems as well. I will say, that in the country I do not know how well she is known, but in Moscow, yes, in Moscow people know her. I can say that she is very popular, literary people in literary circles of course know her. And she participates in many literary seminars and in literary conferences. They know her well in Bulgaria and in Serbia. And

when people read her poems, if they did not know her before and just started reading her poems, I have seen many times that people start to become interested in her.

- Are there any themes or images in her poetry that you particularly like?

She has many themes and images, which are repeated from one poem to another. First, there is the image of birds. She has many birds in her poems and I think that she associates herself with birds, and when she writes about birds she is often writing about herself, her state of being, her soul. And I really like this image. Also, I like that she has a good sense of humor. It is not always apparent, and not apparent in all of her poems. I think that she might not even know herself that she has a good sense of humor. But, when she shows it, when she is ironic, and jokes in her poems, it is always awesome. I love when she writes about nature, about winter for example. She writes well about the cold time of the year, about fall and winter. I also already mentioned her portrait poems. Some of her poet friends scold her for them, and say “why would you write about these normal people, who would this be interesting to?” To me it is interesting. I think that her real talent is revealed there, where the prose writer in her meets the poet. It seems that a prose writer must write about these simple people, some kind of story. Yes, a poet must write about something beautiful, not worldly. And when she joins these different things, it turns out amazing. And I forgot to say that at the institute she studied prose, not poetry. She finished our institute as a prose writer, and she finished with a collection of stories, which were highly praised when she graduated. But her poems and not her prose are published,

and now I think she stopped writing prose completely. I think she writes only poetry, but I also liked her prose.

Natalia Elizarova: Translations

The poems of Natalia Elizarova that I have chosen to translate are all from the selection of her work that was printed in the journal “Youth” «Юность». I wanted to show a variety of imagery, ideas, motifs, and different styles that are present in her work, while still choosing poems that felt connected overall. Many of these poems are similar in their themes of love, space and time, and the everyday feel of Russia. In these poems she uses many Biblical references, as well as references to Russian history and myth. She juxtaposes these lofty images with those of ordinary life: food, small towns, grasshoppers, pages from a book, or a stuffy room. She additionally places these motifs of the grand and the ordinary with those of the personal: expressions of love as well as physical sensations. In the end, her poems cannot be defined by one category, but at once encapsulate a range of sensations, high and low, that characterize this Russian woman-poet’s experience. They are permeated with the erotic and intimate emotions of a woman’s love, complimented by rich historical imagery and references, which open up the narrative to give us a broader reflection of Russia and her past.

А ему, наверное, хочется пирогов,

а она сидит на постели – спина строга.

Ей бы в Одессу, в Припять, в Могилев, во Льгов,

ей бы отсюда – нагой – к чертям на рога.

А он говорит ей что-то про сломанный кран и плесневый хлеб,

про работу на выходных, пожилую мать.

А у нее голова светится так, что почти он ослеп.

Больно даже дышать, не то что – смотреть,

хочется броситься – погасить, сломать.

И он думает, может, ей завести детей,

ну, или, допустим, хотя бы собак –

пару шпицев, и с ними в утренний парк

выходить гулять, и, как у нормальных пар,

к вечеру будет более общих тем.

А она вдруг ложится набок, сворачивается в узел тугой,

и лопатки корчатся, и волосы заслоняют лицо.

И вдруг спрашивает: «Может, завтра испечь пирогов?»

Зная точно, что ни мужем не быть ему, ни отцом.

And he, most likely, is craving some pie he's tasted

and she sits on the bed, her spine severely rigid

She'd be in Odessa, Pripyat, Mogilev, or Ligo,

she'd be far away, carried by devil horns, naked

And he says to her something about a broken faucet and moldy bread,

about his elderly mother, weekends spent at work.

And he's nearly blinded by the bright light emanating from her head.

Breathing becomes painful, and watching even more,

the want to throw away, repay, and break, lurks.

And he thinks that, maybe, she should start a family,

or, well, at the very least, a dog might work
 a pair of Spitzes, with her in the morning air
 on a stroll through the park, and, like a normal pair,
 by nighttime they will have more things in common.
 And she suddenly lies down on her side, her body collapsing in a tight knot,
 and her shoulder blades are writhing, and her hair in her face obscures her.
 And she suddenly says: “Maybe, tomorrow I'll bake a pie?”
 Knowing for sure, he will not be a husband, nor a father.

For this poem, I kept the rhyme scheme and number of syllables per line (there is no meter), because I felt that it was needed to convey the emotion of the poem, and it did not interfere with staying as close to the original meaning as possible. Pies or пироги, from the first line of the poem, refers in this case not specifically to fruit pies in the American tradition, but in Russia would refer to baked dough filled with some kind of filling, savory or sweet, and ranging in size from quite small to a more typical American pie size or even larger. Additionally, the phrase “carried by devil horns” or «к чертям на pora» from line four of the poem is an idiom that means to go somewhere very far away, to an unspecified place. It also expresses a sense of desperation, a willingness to be taken to hell by the devil.

I like the way Natalia Elizarova approaches this poem, with a juxtaposition of the minutia of daily life alongside very strong and painful ideas, both emotional and physical. The surface level interaction of the pair is concerned with food, moldy bread, and weekends at work, while internally the woman is having an intense emotional and

potentially life changing realization. Additionally, the man's thought that their life together will improve if they only do something as "normal" as having children or getting a dog contrasts starkly with the woman's internal struggle, knowing she cannot continue with the relationship, as well as her intense physical discomfort and pain. Her reference to the four cities in the third line is additionally important. These are cities which have historical importance to Russia, which were all at one time a part of Russia and the USSR. Ligov was completely destroyed by the Mongols, but in the 17th century a monastery was built on the site of the former city (Контуш). Odessa, Mogilev, and Ligov were all occupied by axis forces during WWII, where Mogilev was the site of a mass extermination of Jews, and a massacre of thousands happened in Odessa (О Могилеве. История)(Калинин). Pripyat is the now abandoned city in Ukraine, which was originally built to serve the nearby Chernobyl nuclear power plant. In 1986 this plant was the site of the biggest nuclear accident in history (Припять и Чернобыль). These references point to a dark and troubled history of the former soviet republics, and yet also to a religious and holy aspect of Russia's past. Ligov was also formerly known as Olgov, which refers to Olga, the first Russian convert to Christianity (Контуш). She is also the grandmother of Vladimir, who converted Kievan Rus' to Christianity. She is also known for her faithfulness to her husband, because of the massive revenge she exacted against the Drevlians after they killed him (Prominent Russians: Princess Olga of Kiev). Olga comes up in many of Natalia Elizarova's poems, because of her position as the first main woman in Russian history, as well as her loving, faithful, strong, and even menacing nature. In these ways she is much like the narrator of Elizarova's poems.

В списке ушедших становится больше имен,
список живых, увы, нестерпимо, краток.

Клен облетел во дворе, из моих тетрадок
памяти книгу сложи и, когда ты нем,
то есть, когда слова и горьки, и смысла
не добавляют к горечи, что внутри,
просто открой – и на строчки мои смотри,
а между ними читай – осторожно – мысли.

Мало любила людей, но всегда – насквозь,
и в лобовую, вдребезги – на осколки.

Под руку тронешь: «Здесь осторожно – скользко».

Вместе – надежно, но все же придется врозь.

Ты не сжигай этих тонких черновики,
ибо тогда кто расскажет тебе о лете,
о кузнецах в траве, о втором билете...

Поезд в семнадцать: Москва. Ленинградский – Псков.

In the list of the departed, the names are still growing
the list of living, alas, is dreadfully small.

All around the yard the pages of my notebooks fall
memories of books composed, and, while you are mute,
that is, when the words are bitter, but their meaning

does not add to their bitterness, that within them,
 simply open—look upon the lines I’ve written
 and read between them—careful—ideas are hidden.
 I’ve only loved a few, but every time fully,
 and truly, shattered into pieces, into fragments.
 You reach out for my hand: “Careful, its slippery”.
 We’re safer together, yet need to part surely
 Don’t burn these delicate drafts of words that I wove
 for then who would tell you about all the summers past,
 or the second ticket, grasshoppers in the grass...
 Train at five p.m.: Moscow. Leningradsky– Pskov.

I chose to keep the rhyme and number of syllables from the original poem in this translation, because I felt it is a poem that is especially full of emotion, and I thought that the rhyme and overall feeling of the poem should remain intact to add to the emotional power, and I felt that I could do this without harming the integrity of the original in its meaning. Leningradsky in the last line of the poem refers to the Leningradsky train station in Moscow.

This poem feels to me especially personal and heartfelt. It is a poem about love, heartbreak. The image of bitterness and love shattered into fragments give it a painful feeling, along with the idea that they are safer together, yet they will need to part. It is also very much about space and time. The image of the second ticket is a particularly tough one. Because she says that it can only be learned of if one reads her drafts, it might

mean that she originally was going to stay in Moscow with this person, and didn't tell them that she had a second ticket for her to return to Pskov. This is also shown by her statement that they need to be separate. This is, of course, just one possible interpretation. She also ties together the ideas of distance of space, like being together and apart at the same time and traveling to a different city on a train, with the ideas of distance of time and memory, referring to the departed, love lost, and memories of books composed.

«У меня к тебе наклон уст
к роднику...»

М. Цветаева

Не объяснить словами
из нескольких букв
легкость имени на губах,
вкус
улыбки, когда ты ко мне глух,
и ни слова с твоих осушенных уст.
Глаз мой верен, раковиной ушной
я настроена лишь на одну волну,
я звучу тобой, я пишу иной
летописи листы,
и нет запасной

жизни, в которой пребудешь ты,
если я утону.

“My mouth leans towards you
to the spring...”

M. Tsvetaeva

It's impossible to explain the words
comprised of several letters
the easiness of a name on the lips,
the taste
of smiles, when you are deaf to me,
and no words come from your exhausted mouth.
My eye is faithful, my ear hearing,
I am tuned in on only one wavelength,
I resound of you, I write further,
pages of a different chronicle,
and no extra
life, in which you will continue,
if I drown.

In this poem, I chose not to keep the sound devices and few instances of rhyme, which are in the original. This is because I felt I would be too unfaithful to the sentiments of the poem, as it is quite compact, concise, and to the point.

This poem starts by quoting the last two lines of the 1923 poem «Наклон», in English “tilt” or “slope”, by the famous 20th century Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva. Both of these poems are love poems from a female perspective, and both poets incorporate a Russian historical element in their works. Her reference to writing a chronicle relates again to the past of Russia, while intimately tying in to her own personal life. Natalia Elizarova’s poem uses very sensual and bodily images, like the taste of smiles, her hearing ears, and faithful eyes. The poem represents a woman’s intense feelings for her beloved. She shows herself as being truly devoted, with faithful eyes, tuned in only to their wavelength, even with the chance of her drowning if they leave.

Не доехав в Печоры и до Соловков,
 Не стяжав чужой и лихой судьбы,
 Гладишь ветер ладонью – он был таков,
 А вокруг ристалище – общий быт.
 И покуда ближний, подняв копье,
 Все окрест глазеет, куда вонзить,
 Ты тревожный воздух глотками пьешь
 Между сменой лютых постылых зим.
 Это - Русь, это – светлое место, где

Между тьмою и сумраком – узкий лаз,
Где и ветер воет в трубе – к беде,
Где так яростен свет для глаз.
Где усталость – не повод «не быть в строю»,
Где о счастье: «слышали, где-то есть»,
Равноценно, что плюшевый кот – баюн
Вдруг заглянет на кухню, попросит есть.
Где и правым, и левым – одна стезя,
От дебатов выпренных проку нет,
Где не любят прямо смотреть в глаза
И прокурена тень тенет.
Отчего же на старом, кривом мосту
Каждый раз замедляешь свои дела,
Снизу рельсы, ползущие в пустоту–
В те края, где сажа бела.

Stopping short of Pechori and Solovki,
And not obtaining a dashing fate,
The wind caresses my palms, and it vanishes,
And all around the battleground are common things.
And while nearby, someone raising a spear,
Looks around for a place to plunge it,
And you drink in sips of anxious air

Between the times of fierce and hateful winters.
 It is Rus', it is a bright place, where
 Between darkness and dusk is a narrow gap,
 Where the wind howls as a trumpet of distress,
 Where the light is so intense on the eyes.
 Where being tired is no excuse to "not be in order",
 Where happiness: "they hear, is somewhere"
 Equivalent to the fluffy cat Bayun
 Suddenly popping into the kitchen, asking to eat.
 Where both right and left, there is one path,
 And from pompous debates comes little good,
 Where people won't look you straight in the eye
 And the shadow from the fish nets has decayed.
 And why, on the old, crooked bridge
 Every time I slow my pace
 Down the rails, creeping to the void
 To the place, where soot is white.

I chose to not keep the rhyme or syllabic form of the original in this translation, because I felt this would make it necessary for me to interfere with the imagery and metaphor used throughout the poem. This poem was especially difficult to translate because of the use of many historical references and antiquated vocabulary. Rus' in the 9th line is in reference to Kievan Rus', the medieval feudal state that was the precursor to

what is now Russia and some of Eastern Europe. In the thirteenth line, to “not be in order” or «не быть в строю» refers to missing a drill in the Army. In the 15th line, the cat Bayun refers to a talking cat from Russian folklore (Dixon-Kennedy 156). In the last line, “like soot is white” or «как сажа бела» is a Russian saying in response to “how are you?” which basically means “not very good”.

I find this poem very interesting in its images of Russia. It portrays Russia as a place of both intense light and immense darkness. It is at once the bright and great Rus’, and a dark, dangerous battleground. It exemplifies the extremes of Russian life. I enjoy the references to the past and to myth in contrast to those of the mundane and ordinary, like an old crooked bridge leading to the void, or the cat Bayun stopping by the kitchen for some food. She additionally continues on a theme of movement and travel, with the reference to the path, the bridge, and stopping short of multiple towns as well as not reaching fate. Additionally, the towns mentioned are both famous for their monasteries, as well as a Stalin era prison camp in the case of Solovki. This ties in the theme of an old, religious and great Russia, accompanied with a very dark reminder of the Soviet era.

Дело даже не в ней, не в тебе, не во мне, а, кроме
 сущей нежности, сжавшейся на ладони,
 тихой жалости, словно от вида крови,
 и озноба, будто от сквозняка,
 ничего не сыскать: броженье и пятый угол.
 Я, быть может, невнятно и даже немного грубо,

но когда я целую тебя всего, обжигая губы,
то меня отпускает безвольно твоя рука.

Говорю с тобой поутру, опускаясь в вечер,
обнимаю тебя так крепко при каждой встрече,
так, что ноет грудь, и руки, и только плечи
все выносят, выдержат и теперь.

Открываю рот, словно рыба в момент удушья-
слов так много, но разве кому-то нужно,
чтобы вслух... А в комнате снова душно,
отвори и окно, и дверь.

Пребываю с тобой в абсолютном земном покое,
не могу до конца понять, отчего такое.

Просто знаю, что если нас снова двое,
остановится дрожь в руках.

Вижу ясные сны, просыпаюсь под птичий гомон
легкой Евой – счастливой, усталой, голой,
и люблю этот праздный, беспечный, ущербный город
и подушки две в васильках.

The cause is not in her, not in him, not in me, but, except
absolute tenderness, curled up on a palm,
quiet pity, as if from the sight of blood,
and chills, as if from a draft,

there's nothing else to find: hopeless wanderings.

I am, maybe, inarticulate and even a bit crude,

but when I kiss you all over, burning lips,

your hands release me, helpless.

I talk with you in the morning, sinking into in the evening,

embrace you so tightly at every meeting,

so much so, that my chest and hands ache, and only my shoulders

are bearing all, and still survive.

Mouth open, like a fish in its moment of suffocation—

there are so many words, but really who needs them

said out loud... And in the room again it is stuffy,

open the window and the door.

I remain with you in absolute earthly peace,

I cannot quite remember why this is.

I just know, that if we are again a couple,

it would stop my hands from trembling.

I have clear dreams, I'm awake under the birds chirping

easy Eve—happy, tired, naked,

and I love this festive, carefree, flawed city

and two pillows embroidered with cornflowers.

In this poem I decided to not keep the rhyme, because I felt it interfered with keeping the same meaning as the original. I decided to take out the phrase «ПЯТЫЙ УГОЛ»

or the “fifth corner” from the fourth line, and replace it with “hopeless”. This is a Russian phrase which refers to a practice by police of standing in all four corners of an interrogation room and telling the suspect they can avoid a beating by finding the fifth corner. This is a metaphor for a hopeless endeavor, unavoidable fate, or looking for refuge where it doesn’t exist (Brodsky 526).

This poem is quite vivid in its imagery of the physical: chilly, burning, aching, trembling, tired, and suffocating sensations and more occur throughout. Yet, there are also feelings of happiness, tenderness, and “absolute earthly peace”. In the end, we find out that the one she loves is no longer together with her, when she states that if they were a couple again it would stop her hands from trembling. In this way, the emotions of the poem are more complex. These are all juxtaposed once again with the ordinary: an embroidered pillow, a stuffy room. There is also a religious motif, when the narrator imagines herself as “easy Eve” in a dream. There is also the image of animals: the suffocating fish, the chirping birds. These show two extremes of emotion depicted through animals. I had trouble with the image of pillows embroidered with cornflowers, but it may refer to an image of happiness and beauty on the superficial level, that is not actually real.

* * *

Нет Руси больше Киевской, сколько ни голоси,
 Брат на брата идет, как Ольга – мстительно - на древлян.
 Как глядеть с надеждою в неба синь,
 Если стреляют, Господи, у Кремля.

Возвращаться домой в темноте, от себя отпустить детей,

В 21 века садиться пустой вагон.

Жить в бездушии, неверии, немоте,

Задувать огонь и вновь разводить огонь.

Пеплом голову - прожито, также не сбережешь

Ни рубля в стекле, ни Спаса собор в Кремле,

Но царь- пушка выстрелит, и промчится земная дрожь,

И появятся трещины в императорском хрустале.

Kievan Rus' is no more, no matter how much we mourn,

Brother at brother it goes, like Olga—vengefully—at the Drevlyani.

How can I look hopefully to the blue of the sky,

If they shoot, oh God, at the Kremlin.

To return home in the dark, to let go of the children,

To sit in the empty train car of the 21st century.

To live soulless, faithless, mute,

Blow out the flame and kindle the flame again.

Cover your head with ashes—life is over, you can save

Neither the rubles in the glass, nor the Savior Cathedral in the Kremlin,

But the Tsar cannon fires, and tremors rush through the earth,

And there will be cracks in the imperial crystal.

I felt I could not keep the rhyme in this poem without changing it too drastically, because of the amount of references to places and foreign words throughout. I had trouble with the translation of the fourth line, because it has an unclear and possibly dual meaning. It is written in a way that «Господи!» can be seen as an exclamation of horror at the idea of shooting at the Kremlin, or it can be read as a hypothetical killing of God. This was not easy to get across in English, where it is less ambiguous. The second line in the poem refers to Olga, the ruler of Kievan Rus', with the Drevlyani being the tribe she exacted her revenge on after they killed her husband. The Tsar in the 11th line refers to the Tsar cannon in the Moscow Kremlin.

This poem is a dark rumination on Russia, connecting the follies of the past with what is happening today. She alludes to the internal or “brother on brother” fighting that has happened in Russia starting from the days of Olga and Kievan Rus'. This is also referenced with the final line, which references the imperial glass cracking in an explosion, referring back to the end of the Romanov dynasty, which a time of Russians fighting other Russians as well. She connects this image of past violence to her image of the 21st century: empty, soulless, faithless, and mute. The poem has an air of impending doom, a very Romantic feeling. She refers to covering her head with ashes, which is an ancient ritual performed at times of grief. Nothing can be saved, and tremors from the cannon blast will soon be shaking the earth, causing cracks in not only the imperial crystal, but likely our entire way of living. The tone of this poem is one of foreboding, and of the eventual path of time.

Conclusion

In my studies of translation theory, I have learned an immense amount about translation's challenges and difficulties, as well as its potential to create something that will spread and continue the life of a work through the ages. By translating Natalia Elizarova's poetry, I gained an experiential insight into the difficulties of translation that is impossible to find from analysis of theory alone. Russian and English are quite different languages, and rendering a translation which shows the original's life and feeling as well as its meaning is no easy task. I have gained a much deeper appreciation for translation, and yet I feel more cautious not to always take a translation as a true representation of the original.

I have learned a lot about Russia and the Russian female perspective as well as Russian contemporary poetry through my analysis of Elizarova's poetry. The importance of history in her poems shows the connectedness Russians feel with their country's mystical and holy, yet often depressing and tragic past. This is woven in with her depictions of the mundanities and hardships of Russian life today, especially from the point of view of a woman looking for love and meaning in her own life.

My goal in this endeavor was that through analysis I, and others, may come to better understand the intricacies and difficulties of translation. I hope that this work will inform the reader about aspects of Russia and its culture previously unknown to them, inspiring them to learn more about Russia, its past and present. I also hope that my translations will both delight and inspire the reader, emboldening them to learn more about Natalia Elizarova and her poetry. Finally, I hope that my ideas will be of help to

future translators, hoping to open up new worlds of different voices to those who, without translation, could not have had the pleasure of hearing them.

Appendix: Original Interview with Tatiana Nikolskaya

Интервью с Татьяной Никольской

- Какое было ваше первое впечатление о Наталии Елизаровой и как оно изменилась с течением времени?

Когда я познакомилась с Наталей Елизаровой, она была моей студенткой, и она меня привлекала тем, что она всегда хотела работать. Ей всегда было мало заданий, она всегда хотела делать больше. Кончилась этот тем, что она стала часто приходить ко мне, и мы с ней занимались индивидуально, занимались русским языком. Она человек очень грамотный и прекрасно знает язык, но она училась на заочном отделение, что значит у нее уже было образование, она юрист по образованию. Но она пишет стихи с детства, и поэтому она решила поступить к нам в институт. Ну и когда училась, она поняла что недостаточно хорошо знает русский язык, что есть над чем работать, и вот так мы с ней стали заниматься. Но потом эти занятия переросли в дружбу. Мы с ней сначала встречались говорить о русском языке, потом просто мы стали говорить о жизни. Вот так изменились наши отношения, то есть теперь я знаю ее как человека, очень близко. Могу сказать, что я ее знаю, конечно, лучше, чем сначала, и по-прежнему я считаю, что она очень много работает, такой трудолюбивый человек. У нее такой аналитический ум, что странно. Она поэт, и мы можем подумать, что она должна быть такой романтической, и совсем нет. Совсем не романтический человек, у нее очень такой математический склад ума, она очень хорошо все понимает и очень строго мыслит.

Вот это меня удивляет, потому что с одной стороны она пишет стихи, но с другой стороны у нее всегда всё очень правильно, четко, по полочкам разложено. Она очень честный человек, всегда говорит правду, вообще никогда не обманывает. И это тоже интересно, потому что она человек с воображением с одной стороны, с другой стороны она очень реалистична.

- Как Ваше впечатление о ее работе и поэзии изменилось с течением времени?

Я думаю, что я ее знаю уже восемь лет, и она стала писать по-другому. Ее первый сборник стихов был очень детский, хотя она была не ребенком когда она его опубликовала. Когда она выпустила его, я думаю, что ей было 25, может быть, лет, не знаю точно, но это был очень непрофессиональный сборник стихов. Конечно, все стихи были о любви, о том, как она любит человека, мне неизвестного. Не было ничего оригинального в этих стихах. Это были типичные стихи молодой женщины, которая не очень знает, как писать. После института она очень выросла в поэтическом отношении. Во-первых, она пишет на разные темы. Ее стихи уже не только о любви, у нее много стихов о родном городе, о людях. У нее есть стихи-портреты, где она пишет о своей тете, бабушке, маме, а каких-то соседях, это просто поэтические портреты. Много стихов, которое я могу назвать философскими стихами. Она пишет о жизни вообще, и, конечно, любая женщина хочет любви, но она научилась писать стихи о жизни без любви, и это неплохо. Это хорошо, когда ты можешь смотреть на жизнь, не только с точки зрения любит тебя

человек или не любит. Когда ты можешь писать о своей любви, о том, как ты любишь жизнь, о том, что ты думаешь о боге, например. Я думаю что она стала просто взрослым человеком, и взрослым профессиональным поэтом. Ну и ее язык ее стихов изменился тоже. Она сложно пишет. У нее непростые стихи, и мне это нравится, потому что это отличает ее от миллионов других поэтов. У нее сложные образы, у нее сложная лексика, и это делает ее стихи красивыми. Ещё заметила, что она кинестетик. Человек, который как бы мыслит движением. Раньше этого совсем не было заметно в стихах. Я думаю потому, что ее первые стихи были вторичными. Она подражала, она старалась имитировать других поэтов. А сейчас она стала собой. Поэтому в ее стихах... она кинестетик, и очень много в ее стихах движения.

- Чем ещё интересуется Наталья Елизарова помимо поэзии?

Как я сказала уже, она юрист и работа отнимает у нее много времени, поэтому будем говорить, помимо поэзии и помимо работы. У нее есть сын, ему сейчас 11 лет, и она очень много времени с ним проводит. Ходит на экскурсии, водит его на разные кружки и так далее. Она любит музыку, она хорошо поёт, любит петь. Играет на гитаре не очень хорошо, но чуть-чуть играет. Она любит книги, не только читать, но и книгу как вещь. Если она видит какую-нибудь красивую книгу, даже если у нее уже есть такая книга, но в другом оформлении, она ее купит обязательно, потому что ей нравятся хорошие красивые книги. Она не так давно завела собаку. Огромная собака, африканский Риджбек, и вот теперь у нее новое хобби. Она должна заниматься с этой собакой, потому что с ней нельзя

не заниматься, она огромная, очень сильная. И вот она теперь воспитывает не только сына, но и собаку. Гулять любит. Она очень любит путешествовать. Она прекрасно водит машину. По России далеко ездит, в другие города. И в другие страны уже не в машине – на самолете летает. Очень любит открывать новые места.

- Какие писатели или поэты повлияли на ее творчество?

Есть современные поэты, которые ей очень близки. Это Ковалги и Елена Исаева. Елена Исаева – это ее учитель. Когда Наталия Елизарова была еще подростком, она занималась в литературной студии Елены Исаевой. Елена Исаева – такая заметная фигура в русской поэзии и драме. Я думаю, что эти два человека, это ее учителя. Если говорит о классической литературе, то она очень хорошо знает Анна Ахматову, много знает наизусть и любит ее. Я думаю, что Ахматова, конечно, повлияла на Наталию. Если говорить о более ранних поэтах, Александр Блок.

- По Вашему мнению, как Наталья Елизарова воспринимается в России?
Насколько она известна?

Если люди любят поэзию, то, я думаю, что многие из них знают это имя. У нее вышло несколько сборников поэтических. Не так давно ее стихи были опубликованы в журнале «Юность», это такой известный журнал. В

«Литературной газете» не так давно печатали ее стихи. Ну, я скажу так, в стране я не знаю, насколько она хорошо известна, в Москве, да, в Москве ее знают. Я не скажу, что она очень популярна, но литературные люди в литературных кругах ее, конечно, знают. И она участвует во многих таких литературных семинарах и в литературных конференциях. Ее хорошо знают в Болгарии, ее хорошо знают в Сербии. И когда люди читают ее стихи, если человек не знал ее раньше, но начинает читать стихи, то я сама просто видела это много раз, как люди начинают интересоваться ей.

- Есть ли какие-нибудь темы или образы в ее поэзии, которые Вы особенно любите?

У нее есть некоторые темы и образы, которые повторяются из одного стихотворения в другое. Во-первых, это образ птицы. У нее очень много птиц в стихах, и я думаю, что она себя ассоциирует с птицей, и когда она пишет о птице, то это очень часто она пишет о себе, о своем состоянии, о своей душе. И мне это нравится. Потом мне нравится, что у нее хорошее чувство юмора. Это не всегда видно и не во всех стихах видно. Я думаю, что она сама, может быть, не знает, что у нее хорошее чувство юмора. Но когда она разрешает себе быть ироничной и шутит в стихах, то это всегда здорово. Я люблю, когда она пишет о природе, о зиме, например. Она очень хорошо пишет стихи о холодном времени года, об осени и о зиме. Кроме того, я уже говорила раньше об этих ее портретах. Некоторые ее друзья-поэты ругают ее за это, говорят, почему ты пишешь об этих

простых людях, кому это может быть интересно. Мне это интересно. Мне кажется, что ее настоящий талант как раз раскрывается там, где в ней встречается прозаик-поэт. Казалось бы, прозаик должен писать о таких простых людях, каких-то историях. Да, а поэт должен писать о чем-то таком красивом, неземном. А вот когда она соединяет одно с другим, это получается очень здорово. И я забыла сказать, что у нас в институте она училась на семинаре прозы, а не поэзии. Она закончила наш институт как прозаик и защищалась с рассказами, сборником рассказов, который очень хвалили, когда она защищалась. Но печатают ее стихи, а не прозу. Сейчас, я думаю, что она прозу вообще перестала писать, я думаю, что она пишет только стихи, но мне ее проза тоже нравилось.

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