

**Belinda Cooke**

**Untitled**

*From the Russian of* **Boris Poplavsky**

The delightful evening was full of smiles and sounds,  
the light blue moon floated by high-sounding,  
in the half darkness you stretched your immortal hand towards  
me,  
that unforgettable hand that drowsily fell from your shoulder.

This evening was wonderfully heavy and mysteriously oppressive,  
recoiling the sunset left the fires in the heights,  
and large flowers decomposing in beds like souls  
shone dying and heavily breathed in sleep.

You encircled me delightfully with a slow glance,  
and you turned on your back and fell asleep.  
I saw how the angel traveller in a crumpled spring dress,  
in a mysterious pose is enchanted by hell.

And spring died and the moon returned to the sun.  
the sun rose and the dark blush appeared.  
The sacred vision was lost in the garbage-ridden park.  
the world arose and started to cry and shed its blossom with  
rose-coloured snow.

**Richard McKane**

**Air Spirit**

*From the Russian of* **Boris Poplavsky**

*To Anna Prismanova*

Maiden autumn came down from heaven.  
Sky blue to the brim.

The white ship of the lonely sinks  
quietly in high, bright-eyed seas.

Under the birch tree in the yellow forest  
sleeps a handsome forest Jesus.

A gentle hare stands over him  
warming his paw on the yellow halo.

Maiden autumn you are beautiful  
as my dead soul.

You are quiet as the dawn mist  
in which she went away from the earth.

O Lord God, how easy it is,  
how deep, how far from this earth.

She lived in a dark house.  
She did no evil to anyone.

She cried a lot, slept a lot.  
How good that she died.

If there's no God or heaven,  
she'll sleep sweetly in the dark.

Sweeter than lying in golden paradise,  
where I'll never come after her.

1927-1930

***Boris Poplavsky** was born in Moscow in 1903 but settled in Paris after the Revolution. He belongs to the younger generation of the first emigration of Russian poets. He was regarded as one of the most talented of these younger poets when his life was tragically cut short in 1935. A fellow drug addict intent on suicide managed to poison both himself and Poplavsky. During his life he published only one book, *Flags*, but he had several posthumous collections. He also completed one novel, *Apollo Unformed*, and started another, along with writing extensive journals.*