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I Burned At The Feast: Selected Poems Of Arseny Tarkovsky



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translated by
Philip Metres and Dimitri Psurtsev



Synopsis

Poetry. Film. Translated from the Russian by Philip Metres and Dimitri Psurtsev. "Tarkovsky now joins the ranks of Mandelstam, Akhmatova, and Brodsky. Philip Metres and Dimitri Psurtsev's translationsâ "succinct and allusive, stingly direct and yet sweeping, mournful and celebratoryâ "are marvels."â "PEN/Heim citation "How does one translate the work of Russian classic, Arseny Tarkovsky? Imagine trying to translate Yeats: high style rhetoric, intense emotion, local tonalities of language, complicated historical background, the old equation of poet vs. state, the tone of a tender love lyric, all meshed into one, all exquisite in its executionâ "and all so impossible to render again. And yet, one tries. In the case of Philip Metres and Dimitri Psurtsev, one tries brilliantly, with gusto, with passion, with attentiveness that is akin to that of a prayer, with the ear of real poets. The result? The gravity and directness of Tarkovsky's tone is brought into English without fail, it is here, honest and pained, piercing and even shy at times, like a deer that looks straight at you before it runs. Tarkovsky's ambition was to seek usâ "those who live after himâ "through earth, through time. He does so in this brilliant translation."â "Ilya Kaminsky "Arseny Tarkovsky was ten years old at the time of the Russian Revolution and died six months before the opening of the Berlin Wall. He spent his career as a poet creating elegant and starkly interior transfigurations of simple happiness and pure grief, triumphs of the individual self against the brutal realities of daily life in wartime and Communist Russia. Through this meticulous translation of his work, readers will encounter a metaphysical complex poetry, at once searing and brooding, very much in dialogue with such great Soviet poets as Osip Mandelstam and Anna Akhmatova. Tarkovsky writes of a country where 'we lived, once upon a time, as if in a grave, drank no tea' but still succeeded in making 'bread from weeds,' where the 'blue sky is dim' but nonetheless manages to be the 'wet-nurse of dragonflies and birds.'"â "Michael Dumanis

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Customer Reviews

Historically, Arseny Tarkovsky's poems have had limited exposure in the English language. Though widely known and highly regarded as a great poet in Russia and the former Soviet Union, he is less well-known in the West. His work, nostalgic, spiritual, emotional, and deeply moving, arguably deserves greater exposure in the English-speaking world. This new anthology of selected poems, translated by Philip Metres and Dimitri Psurtsev, not only fills that need but surpasses it with this fantastic and accessible bilingual volume of Tarkovsky's poetry. The translations, which capture the feeling, essence, rhythm, and depth of Tarkovsky's words as best English can, are superb and it is a great treat to see them side-by-side with the original Russian-language texts. The collection is complemented by an excellent afterward by Metres on translating. Overall, it is truly a work jam-packed with so many beautiful words and so much excellent material that it astounds one to think that it is only just over 200 pages long! It is certainly a must-have addition to the library of any serious Slavicist or scholar of Russian poetry.

These poems are beautifully translated, carrying over into English all the passion, emotion, and sensibilities of Tarkovsky. Highly recommended.

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