

Swarthmore College

## Works

---

Russian Faculty Works

Russian

---

2017

### Translation Of Selected Poems By M. Savka

M. Savka

Sibelan E.S. Forrester

*Swarthmore College*, [sforres1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:sforres1@swarthmore.edu)

M. Kalyna

B. Pechenyak

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-russian>



Part of the [Slavic Languages and Societies Commons](#)

Let us know how access to these works benefits you

---

#### Recommended Citation

M. Savka, Sibelan E.S. Forrester, M. Kalyna, and B. Pechenyak. (2017). "Translation Of Selected Poems By M. Savka". *Words For War: New Poems From Ukraine*.

<https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-russian/272>

This work is brought to you for free by Swarthmore College Libraries' Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Russian Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact [myworks@swarthmore.edu](mailto:myworks@swarthmore.edu).

\* \* \*

We wrote poems  
about love and war,  
so long ago  
we could have gone grey three times over—  
in the days before we had war,  
it seemed love would never burn out  
and pain was in the offing  
Yes, there *were* wounds there,  
not just cracks in a chocolate heart,  
but they managed to heal  
and we went on living.  
It wasn't mocking,  
or some deliberate game.  
We read the signs  
on palimpsests of old posters,  
on the walls of blackened buildings,  
in coffee grounds.  
What changed, my sister?  
Our hot-air balloon  
turned into a lead ball.  
The metaphor — died.

*Translated from the Ukrainian  
by Sibelan Forrester and Mary Kalyna with Bohdan Pechenyak*

\* \* \*

Forgive me, darling, I'm not a fighter.  
Every time you gaze into my face,  
I tell you:  
I have a knife to cut willow twigs –  
I can weave you a basket –  
If you like, I can weave you a bird,  
And plant violets in its eyes.  
I'm not a fighter, darling,  
I have a knife to prune branches  
On the young trees.  
You haven't come out to the garden for so long.  
The cherries are coming in.  
Darling, why have you gone so grey?

*Translated from the Ukrainian  
by Sibelan Forrester and Mary Kalyna with Bohdan Pechenyak*

\* \* \*

january pulled him apart  
february knocked him off his feet  
spitting blood into the snow  
he waited for his march –  
but didn't know what shore  
he'd be able to cling to  
god, what a calendar –  
blow after blow  
his heart scarred  
by such weird months:  
Deathcember, Sorrowtober, or Bittertember  
where even the trees grow  
upside down, crowns up into roots  
so young he barely lived  
yet dying his death fully  
then one day  
the war died with him  
and he was born again in may  
amidst the grasses  
or maybe he didn't really die  
but just lay in the grass  
under a wide open sky  
under the sky everyone's alive

*Translated from the Ukrainian  
by Sibelan Forrester and Mary Kalyna with Bohdan Pechenyak*