

# **Two Poems**

**Anzhelina Polonskaya  
trans. Andrew Wachtel**

**Anzhelina Polonskaya was born in Malakhovka, a small town** near Moscow. Since 1998, she has been a member of the Moscow Union of Writers and in 2003, Polonskaya became a member of the Russian PEN-centre. In 2004 an English version of her book, entitled *A Voice*, appeared in the acclaimed Writings from an Unbound Europe series at Northwestern University Press. This book was shortlisted for the 2005 Corneliu M Popescu Prize for European Poetry in Translation. Polonskaya has published translations in many of the leading world poetry journals, including *World Literature Today*, *Descant*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Poetry Review UK*, *The Ameircan Poetry Review*, and *International Poetry Review*, *Boulevard*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Barrow Street*, *The Journal*, *Poetry Daily*, *AGNI*, *New England Review*, and *The Literary Review*.

In October 2011 the *Oratorio-Requiem Kursk*, the libretto of which consists of ten of Polonskaya's poems, had its debut at the Melbourne Arts Festival. In 2013, *Paul Klee's Boat*, a bilingual edition of her latest poems, was published by Zephyr Press and was shortlisted for the 2014 Best Translated Book Award and for the 2014 PEN Literary Awards. Anzhelina Polonskaya has been awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship and her work has also been translated into German, Dutch, Slovenian, Latvian, Spanish, and other languages. Polonskaya continues to live and work in Malakhovka, where she is preparing a new volume of poetry for publication. She works as a poetry editor at *Russian Switzerland*.

## Голосом Каллас

Оборвано. До аккорда.  
Расстались. Распались, как половины плода:  
на мякоть и косточку.  
Один лишь выстрел. Самоубийственный.  
Порох сажает ожоги, как розы садовник.  
Прощай надолго.  
Мы разлетелись на миллионы атомов.

Мария Каллас:

«Ари, мой голос упавший ты будешь слышать повсюду,  
он станет звучать во сне, лишит рассудка, заставит  
сдаться,  
потому что умеет брать любые крепости».

Мой голос, тебе он мешал, не так ли?  
Не ты ли сказал: «Дорогая, поэзия — неполноценна.  
Мне нужна женщина —  
плоть от плоти, кость от кости земная, моё подобие».  
Конец связи.

Мария Каллас:

«Ты не верил, что я могла умереть от любви.  
Знай же — я умерла.  
Мир оглох. Голос не перенёс  
низости твоей пощёчины.  
Но боги Греции, он отомстит за меня».

Мария, всё повторимо. В парижской квартире  
ли, в русской провинции.  
Матери отрекаются, не то что — любовники.  
Зачем им подлинники, зачем богини — им,  
когда есть копии из ребра.

## In the Voice of Callas

Cut off. Before the final chord.  
We've parted. Separated like a ripe fruit:  
flesh from stone.  
Just a single shot. Suicidal.  
Gunpowder plants burns, like a gardener roses.  
Farewell for a long time.  
We've fissioned into a million atoms.

Maria Callas:

“Ari, you'll hear my broken voice everywhere,  
it will sound in your sleep, drive you crazy, force you to  
surrender,  
because it can conquer any fortress.”

My voice somehow bothered you, didn't it?  
Didn't you once say: “Poetry, my dear, is not enough.  
I need a woman—  
flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone, just like me.”  
End of the affair.

Maria Callas:

“You never believed that I could die of love.  
Well you need to know—I did.  
The world's gone deaf. My voice could not survive  
the meanness of your slap.  
But the Greek gods will avenge me.”

Maria, everything can be repeated. In a Paris apartment  
or in the Russian provinces.  
Mothers give up their children, to say nothing of lovers.  
Why do they need originals, or goddesses  
when they can make a copy from their ribs?

## Дождь

Дождь шёл весь день.  
Стучали капли по железным скамейкам,  
и мне вспомнился Чехов на каком-то старинном диване,  
больной.  
Я не вставала тот долгий день с постели.  
От снотворного отяжелевшая, словно облако.  
Мне казалось, что существует всему предел.  
Но любовь прошла, даже тоска отступила,  
словно шакалка, предчувствуя и скуля.  
Ровным счётом ничего не осталось — комната.  
Дождь поливал, пока не стемнело.  
И вдруг я порезалась гудками ночного поезда  
и заплакала.  
Оттого, что словами нельзя.

## Rain

The rain came down all day.  
The drops clattered against the iron benches  
and Chekhov, ill, sitting on some sort of old-fashioned sofa  
came to mind.  
That long day I never got out of bed.  
I felt weighed down by the sleeping pill, like a cloud.  
There's a limit to everything, it seemed to me.  
But love passed and even yearning faded,  
like a jackal, baring her teeth in anticipation.  
In sum, nothing remained—just my room.  
The rain poured down until it got dark.  
And suddenly the whistle of a night train slashed through me,  
and I started to cry.  
Because words can't say it.