

WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday 11 January 2022 1.00pm

Modest Musorgsky: Unorthodox Music

Claire Booth soprano

Christopher Glynn piano

Modest Musorgsky (1839-1881)

Prologue

A Society Tale: The Goat (1867)

Nursery

Nurse and I from *From Memories of Childhood* (1865)

From *The Nursery* (1868-72)

With Nurse • In the corner

First Punishment: Nurse Shuts me in a Dark Room from *From Memories of Childhood*

On the Hobbyhorse from *The Nursery*

Youthful Years

Longing (1866)

Impromptu passionné (1859)

From my tears (1866)

Night (1868 version)

Marriage

Hopak (1868 version)

Oh, how your eyes look at me sometimes (1866)

Trepak from *Songs and Dances of Death* (1875-7)

Loneliness

The leaves rustled sadly (1859 rev. 1863-6)

Cum mortuis in lingua mortua from *Pictures from an Exhibition* (1874)

From *Sunless* (1874)

Within four walls • On the river

Rêverie (1865)

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Unorthodox Music

Musorgsky's Songs and Dances of Life

'Life, wherever it is shown; truth, however bitter; speaking out boldly, frankly, point-blank to men – that is my aim.' – Modest Musorgsky

Every **Musorgsky** song is a slice of life. Having spent a year exploring this most individual and idiosyncratic of all Russian composers, we found ourselves responding to the innate drama of his 66 surviving songs by organising our selection so that (if you want to hear them this way) they describe the arc of an imagined life – a journey from innocence to experience. The great cycles (*Youthful Years*, *The Nursery*, *Sunless* and *Songs and Dances of Death*) are all represented here, but rather than perform them complete we've chosen to intersperse lesser-known songs and solo piano pieces to create a prologue and four 'scenes', taking our cue from the sequences and tableaux of Musorgsky's operas, but also his belief that every artist must 'mix his colours and work freely'.

Our prologue is a song Musorgsky composed to his own words and subtitled - with plenty of irony - 'A Society Tale'. A young girl runs a mile when she encounters an old, hunched, bearded goat, scared witless by its ugliness, but on meeting a man with identical qualities has no hesitation in marrying him! And straightaway, we hear how Musorgsky can sketch out a character in music. Like the great short story writers of Russian literature, he only needs a brief form to give the sense of a whole life. The rest of our programme imagines how such a life might have unfolded.

We begin in childhood, with three songs from the song cycle *The Nursery*, interleaved with two little piano pieces in which Musorgsky evokes memories of his own infancy (they were composed in 1865, shortly after his own mother died.) 'Nurse and I' evokes the gentle repetitions of a caregiver and acts as a prelude to 'With Nurse', where a child begs to be told a favourite tale. 'In the corner' depicts a mischievous toddler unravelling a ball of wool - until Nanny's patience snaps. We follow it with 'Nurse Shuts me in a Dark Room', an example of Musorgsky's famously 'wild style' at the keyboard, before ending our childhood sequence with the gleeful adventure of 'On the hobbyhorse'.

A shimmering setting of Heine's poem *Longing* introduces a sequence we've named *Youthful Years* (after the title of Musorgsky's first song collection). An *Impromptu passionné* sustains the same mood of dreamy infatuation before giving way to 'From my tears' (also a poem by Heine) where pulsing chords evoke 'a midnight chorus of nightingales'. This is followed by

one of Musorgsky's greatest inspirations: a *Romance-fantasia* that follows every shifting mood of Pushkin's poem *Night* to create an unforgettable atmosphere. Freeform, improvisatory and impressionistic, this is the kind of Musorgsky that so inspired Debussy: fearlessly following psychological truth and putting its faith in 'the melody of life, not of classicism'. It is as if the poem breathes out in music.

Innocence turns to experience in the third scene of our song-story, entitled *Marriage* (after Musorgsky's unfinished opera). It opens with a 'Hopak' depicting an archetypal figure from Russian folklore: the woman who must berate her useless, vodka-sodden husband. In a furious, feminist tirade, she gives him the finger and leaves him to rock the children to sleep while she heads off the tavern herself to flirt with the various 'Semyons and Ivans' that she might have married instead of a drunk. A quieter moment of marital unhappiness is expressed in 'Oh, how your eyes look at me sometimes', which laments a 'cold, uncaring gaze', before three stark chords (and the *Dies Irae* chant murmuring ominously in the bass) introduce the devastating 'Trepak' from *Songs and Dances of Death*, in which a howling blizzard is approaching and Death is eyeing a drunken peasant struggling through the snow.

Our final group *Loneliness* reflects one of the great themes of Musorgsky's life and music. 'The leaves rustled sadly' is a song of infinite and very Russian sadness through which strains of priestly chant sound, just as they sound through 'Cum mortuis in lingua mortua', a haunting moment from the dark heart of *Pictures from an Exhibition*. The song cycle *Sunless* was composed in the same year of 1874 but never achieved the same recognition. Music this introverted, this contained, was never going to be as popular as *Pictures* but it is a masterpiece of compression and desolation nonetheless. 'Within four walls' expresses rejection and claustrophobia, while 'On the river', a suicide note in song, ruminates on the futility of life as profoundly as any song since *Winterreise*. The river 'caresses and frightens, it engulfs me in doubt' the poet tells us, and 'Is it summoning me to the depths? I would plunge in without hesitation'.

We like to imagine this Ophelia-like vision extending into the piano piece *Rêverie*, with its watery theme and desolate tone. Its final bars provide a classic example of Musorgsky's unorthodoxy. The piece ends, by all accepted standards, 'wrongly', away from the home key, in the musical equivalent of mid-air. But as so often with Musorgsky, the 'wrongness' is also what is most right, and what we love most about this music. Without it he could never have told so much truth.

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Prologue

Modest Musorgsky (1839-1881)

A Society Tale: The Goat (1867)

Modest Musorgsky

Shla devitsa progulyatsya, na
luzhyok pokrasovatsya,
Vdrug navstrechu yei
kozyol!
Staryi, gryaznyi, borodatyi,
Strashnyi, zloi i ves mokhnatyi,
sushchii chort!

A young girl was out strolling,
posing in the meadow
when suddenly towards her
there came a goat!
Old and dirty, bearded and scary,
evil and shaggy – the devil
himself!

I devitsa ispugalas,
Ot kozla begom pomchalas
pryamo v kust,
I pritayilas,
Ye le dyshet, chut zhiva.

The girl took flight
and rushed straight into the
bushes to escape him,
and there she hid,
scarcely breathing, barely alive.

Shla devitsa pod venets,
Znat prishla pora yei zamuzh,
nu i vyshla!
Muzh i staryi i
gorbatyi,
Lysyi, zloi i borodatyi, sushchii
chort.

The young girl was getting wed,
it seemed high time she should,
and so she did!
Her husband was old and
hunchbacked,
bald, evil and bearded – the devil
himself!

Chto-zh, devitsa ispugalas? Gm!
Kak zhe!
Ona k muzhu prilaskalas,
Uveryala, chto verna, gm! Chto
v muzha vlyublennaya,
Chto primernaya
zhena.

So did she take fright then?
Hmm! Of course not!
She cuddled up to her husband,
assured him she was faithful,
hmm! Assured him
that she loved him and was a
model wife.

Nursery

Nurse and I from *From Memories of Childhood* (1865)

From *The Nursery* (1868-72)

Modest Musorgsky

With Nurse (1868)

Rasskazhi mne, nyanyushka,
Rasskazhi mne, milaya,
Pro togo, pro buku
strashnogo
Kak tot buka po lesam
brodil,

Tell me please, Nanny, tell me,
all about the dreadful bogey-man:
how the bogey-man roamed
about the woods,
how he carried children off into
the forest,

Kak tot buka v les detei
nosil,
I kak gryz on ikh belye kostochki
I kak deti te krichali, plakali.

Nyanyushka! Vyed za to ikh,
Detei-to, buka sel,
Chto obideli nyanyu
staruyu,
Papu s mamoi ne
poslushali;
Ved za to on sel ikh
Nyanyushka?

Ili vot shto;
Rasskazhi mne luchshe pro
tsarya s tsaritsei,
Chto za morem zhili v teremu
bogatom.
Yeshchyo tsar vsyo na nogu
khromal;
Kak spotknyotsya, tak grib
vyrastyot.
U tsaritsy vsyo nasmork
byl,
Kak chikhnyot styokla
vdrebezgi!

Znayesh, Nyanyushka,
Ti pro buku-to uzh ne
rasskazyvai,
Bog s nim, s bukai!
Rasskazhi mne, Nyanya,
Tu smeshnuyu-to!

In the corner (1870)

Akh ty, prokaznik!
Klubok razmotal,
Prutki rasteryal!
Akh ty! Vsye petli
spustil!
Chulok yes zabryzgal
chernilami!
V ugol! V ugol!
Poshol v ugol! Prokaznik!

Ya nichego ne sdela, Nyanyushka,
Ya chulocek ne trogal,
Nyanyushka!
Klubocek razmotal
kotyonochek,
I prutochki razbrosal
kotyonochek.
A Mishenka byl
painka,

and how he gnawed at their
little white bones,
and how the children cried
and screamed aloud!

Nanny dear! Surely the reason
the bogey-man ate the children
is because they were bad to
their old nanny,
they didn't listen to their daddy
and mummy;
wasn't that why he ate them,
Nanny dear?

Or perhaps, instead,
you could tell me about the King
and Queen,
who lived beside the sea in a
splendid castle?
Yet the King was very lame, and
wherever
he stumbled mushrooms grew
up.
And the Queen always had a
cold in the head,
and when she sneezed the
glasses were smashed to bits!

You know, Nanny dear,
don't tell me anything about the
bogey-man.
Let's forget all about him!
Tell me a story, Nanny,
that will make me laugh!

Oh, you little rascal!
You've unwound my ball of wool,
and you've lost my needles!
Oh dear! You've dropped all the
stitches!
And the stocking's all splattered
with ink!
Into the corner! Into the corner!
Stand in the corner! You rascal!

I didn't do anything, Nanny dear.
I didn't touch the little stocking,
Nanny dear.
It was the kitten who unwound
your little ball of wool,
and the kitten who pulled your
little needles out.
But little Misha has been a good
boy,

Mishenka byl umnista.
 A Nyanya zlaya, staraya,
 A u Nyani nosik-to zapachkannyi
 Misha chistyenkii,
 prichyosannyi
 A u Nyani chepchik na boku.
 Nyanya Mishenku obidela,
 Naprasno v ugol
 postavila;
 Misha bolshe ne budet lyubit
 svoyu Nyanyushku
 Vot chto!

little Misha has been a clever boy.
 And Nanny is old and bad,
 and Nanny has a dirty nose.
 Misha is a clean little boy, and
 his hair is neatly combed,
 but Nanny's cap is all crooked.
 Nanny has been bad to little Misha,
 to make him stand in the corner
 for nothing.
 And Misha won't love his Nanny
 any more,
 so there!

First Punishment: Nurse Shuts me in a Dark Room from *From Memories of Childhood* (1865)

On the Hobbyhorse from *The Nursery* (1872)

Modest Musorgsky

Gei! Gop, gop, gop! Gop, oi!
 Gey, podi! Gei! Gei! Geo, podi!
 Gop, gop, gop! Gop, gop!
 Gop, Gop! Gei! Gei, gei!
 Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
 Tpru ... stoi!

Hey! Clop, clop, clop! Clip – clop!
 Hey, giddy-up! Hey! giddy-up!
 Clop, clop, clop! Clip – clop!
 Clop, clop, clop! Hey! Hey!
 Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
 Whoa! Stop!

Vasya, a Vasya!
 Slushai, prikhodi igrat
 segodnya;
 Tolko ne pozdno!

Vasya, hey Vasya!
 Will you come and play with me
 today?
 Only don't be late!

Nu ty gop! Gop, gop!
 Proshchai, Vasya!
 Ya v Yukki poyekhal...
 Tolko k vecheru
 Nepremenno budu...
 My ved rano, ochen rano
 Spat lozhimsa...
 Prikhodi zh smotri!

Now, giddy-up! Clip – clop!
 Goodbye, Vasya!
 I'm off to Yuky ...
 but towards evening ...
 I shall certainly be back ...
 since it's early, very early,
 when they put us to bed ...
 come and you'll see!

Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
 Gei! Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-
 ta-ta!
 Podi! Gei! Gei, prodi! Gei, gei,
 podi!
 Gei, gei! Razdavlyu!
 Oi!

Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta!
 Hey! Ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-
 ta-ta!
 Giddy-up! Hey! Hey, giddy-up!
 Giddy-up!
 Hey, hey! I'll knock them all
 down! Oh!

Oi, bolno! Oy, nogu!

Oh, its sore! Oh, my foot!

“Milyi moi, moi malchik, chto za
 gore?
 Nu, polno plakat!

My darling one, my little boy,
 how terrible!
 But don't cry any more;

Prodyot, moi
 drug!
 Postoi-ka, vstan na nozhki pryamo:
 Vot tak, ditya!
 Posmatri, kakaya prelest!
 Vidish! V kustakh nalevo?
 Akh, Chto za ptichka divnaya!
 Shto za pyoryshki!
 Vidish?.. Nu Chto?
 Proshlo?“

it'll soon be better, my little
 horseman;
 stand up straight on your feet,
 that's it, little one!
 Look, how pretty! Do you see?
 On the bushes, there on the left?
 Oh, what a beautiful bird!
 Such little feathers!
 You see? How's your foot?
 Better?

Proshlo!
 Ya v Yukki syezdil, Mama!
 Teper domain toropitsya
 nado ...
 Gop, gop! Gosti budut ... Gop!
 Toropitsya nado!..

Better!
 I've been to Yuky, Mama;
 now ... home ... I have to hurry
 ... clip – clop!
 My friends will be there ...
 I have to hurry ...

Youthful Years

Longing (1866)

Lev Mey

Khotel by v yedinoe
 slovo
 Ya slit moyu grust i pechal,
 I brosit to slovo na veter,
 Chtob veter unyos yego vdal.

Would that I could pour into a
 single word
 All my sorrow and sadness,
 And throw that word to the wind,
 Which might carry it far away.

I pust-by to slovo
 pechali
 Po vetru k tebe doneslos,
 I pust-by vseгда i
 povsyudu
 Ono k tebe v serdtse lilos.

And would that that word of
 sadness
 Were borne to you on the wind,
 And would that always and
 everywhere
 It would flow into your heart.

I yesli ustalye ochi
 Somknulis pod gryozoi nochnoi,
 O, pust-by to slovo pechali
 Zvuchalo vo sne and
 toboi!

And if your tired eyes
 Should close in nocturnal reverie,
 Then this word of sadness
 Would sound over you in your
 dreams.

Impromptu passionné (1859)

From my tears (1866)

Heinrich Heine, trans. Mikhail Mikhailov

Iz slyoz moikh vyroslo
 Mnogo dushistykh i yarkikh
 tsvetov,
 A vzdokhi moi perelilis
 V polunoshchnyi khor
 solovyov.

From my tears have sprung
 Many bright and fragrant
 flowers;
 And my sighs have overflowed
 Into the midnight chorus of
 nightingales.

I yesli menya ty
polyubish,
Malyutka, tvetochki tvoi,
I zvuchnyuyu pesn pod okoshkom
Tebe, moi drug, spoyut
solovi.

And if you should fall in love
with me, my child,
These flowers will be yours,
And under your window, my friend,
The nightingales will sing their
resounding song.

Night (1868)

after Aleksandr Pushkin

Moy golos dlya tebya i laskovyi i
tomnyi
Trevozhit pozdnee molchanye
nochi tyomnoi.
Bliz lozha moego pechalnaya
svecha
Gorit; moi stikhi tekut, slivayas i
zhurcha,
Tekut, ruchi lyubvi, polny
toboi ...
Vo tme nochnoi tvoi glaza
blistayut predo mnoyu,
Mne ulybayutsya i zvuki slyshu
ya:
Moy drug, moi nezhenyi drug,
lyublyu ... tvoya ...

My voice, calling you with love
and longing,
breaks the silence in the depths
of the dark night.
By my bed a single mournful
candle
burns; my verses flow on,
running like a stream,
they flow, a current of love all
for you ...
Out of the darkness your eyes
shine on me,
they smile at me and I hear
these sounds:
'My dear friend, my tender
friend, I love you, I am yours.'

Marriage

Hopak (1868)

Taras Shevchenko trans. Lev Mey

Goi! gop, gop, gopaka!
Polyubila kazaka,
Tolko staryi da ne dyuzhii,
Tolko ryzhii, neuklyuzhii,
Vot i dolya vsya poka! Goi!
Dolya sledom za toskoyu,
A ty staryi za
vodoyu,
A sama-to ya v shinok
Da khvachu sebe kryuchok,
A potom vsyo chok da chok,
Charka pervaya kolom, a
vtoraya sokolom,
Baba v plyas poshla vkonets,
A za neyu molodets,
Staryi, ryzhii, babu
klichet,
Tolko baba kukish tychet.
'Kol zhenilsja, satana,
Dobyvai-zhe mne pshena, vot
chto!

Hey! Hop, hop, hopak!
I've fallen for a Cossack,
only, he's old and scrawny,
and a clumsy redhead,
such is my fate for now! Hey!
'Tis a fate that follows grief,
off you go, old man, and fetch
some water,
and I'll head to the tavern
and get myself a vodka,
and then another and another,
the first shot stabs, but the next
one soars,
the woman begins to dance wildly,
followed by a dashing young man,
the redhead old man calls after
his woman,
but she just gives him the finger.
'Since you're married,
go and fetch me some millet.
That's what!

Nado detok pozhalet, nakormit i
priodet. Vot kak!
Dobyvai, smotri, byt
khudu,
A ne to sama
dobudu!
Slysh ty!
Dobyvai zhe, staryi,
ryzhii,
Dobyvai skorei, besstyzhii!
Chto, vzjal?
Tolko, staryi, ne greshi,
Kolybelki kolyshi,
Kolybelki, staryi, kolyshi.
Vot tak!
Kak byla ya molodoyu da
ugodnitseyu,
Ya povasila perednik nad
okonnitseyu,
I v okoshechko
kivayu,
V plyaltsakh shelkom
vyshivayu.
Goi, Semyony vy, Ivany,
Nadevaite-ka kaftany,
Da so mnoi gulyat
poidyomte!
Da prisядem,
zapoyomte!
Goi! Goi! Goi! Goi! Goi! Goi! Goi!
Goi! Goi!
Goi, gop, gop, gopaka!
Polyubila kazaka,
Tolko staryi da ne dyuzhii,
Tolko ryzhii, neuklyuzhii,
Vot i dolya vsya poka! Goi!

You should pity the children,
feed and clothe them!
Go on, fetch it – or there'll be
hell to pay,
and if you don't, then I'll do it
myself!
Do you hear!
Go on, go and fetch it, you old
redhead,
fetch it right now, for shame!
Well then, have you?
Go on, old man, do as you're told,
rock those cradles,
rock those cradles, old man.
That's how!
When I was young and
pretty
I would hang my apron by the
window,
I would hang my head out of the
window
and embroider with silk on my
tambour.
Hey, you Semyons and you Ivans,
put your finest kaftans on,
and come and have some fun
with me!
Let's take a seat and have a
sing-song!
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey! Hey!
Hey! Hey! Hey!
Hey, hop, hop, hopak!
I've fallen for a Cossack,
only, he's old and scrawny,
and a clumsy redhead,
such is my fate for now! Hey!

Oh, how your eyes look at me sometimes (1866)

Aleksey Pleshcheyev

Akh, zachem zhe tvoi ochi
poroyu
Na menya tak surovo glyadyat –
I tomit moi dushu
toskoyu
Tvoi kholodnyi, nelaskovyi vzglyad?

Oh why do your eyes
sometimes
Stare at me so severely –
And why does your cold,
uncaring gaze
Weary my soul?

Bez ulybki i v gordom molchani
Ty prokhodish, kak ten, predo
mnoi,
I v dushe zataivshi stradane,
Ya revnivo slezhu za toboi.

Unsmiling, proudly silent,
You pass before me, like a
shadow,
And keeping my suffering to myself,
I jealously observe you.

Ty lyubovyu svoei ozaryala,
Kak vesnoi, moi grustnye dni,

Once you illuminated my sad days
With your love, like spring,

Prilaskai zhe menya, kak
byvalo,
Laskoi proch moyu grust
otgoni.

Oh just embrace me, as you
used to,
And drive away my sadness
with your affection.

Trepak from *Songs and Dances of Death* (1875-7)

Arseny Golenishchev-Kutuzov

Les da polyany, bezlyudye
krugom.
Vyuga i plachet i stonet,
Chuetsya, budto vo mrake
nochnom,
Zlaya, kogo-to
khoronit;
Glyad, tak i est! V temnote
muzhika
Smert obnimaet, laskaet,
S pyanenkim plyashet vdvoyom
trepaka,
Na ukho pesn napevaet:
'Oi, muzhichok, starichok
ubogoi,
Pyan napilsya, poplyolsya
dorogoi,
A myatel-to, vedma, podnyalas,
vzygrala.
S polya v les dremuchii
nevznachai zagnala.
Gorem, toskoi da nuzhdoi
tomimyi,
Lyag, prikorni, da usni, rodimyi!
Ya tebya, golubchik moi,
snezhkom sogreyu,
Vkrug tebya velikuyu igru
zateyu.
Vzbei-ka postel, ty myatel-
lebyodka!
Gei, nachinai, zapevai pogodka!
Skazku, da takuyu, chtob vsyu
noch tyanulas,
Chtob pyanchuge krepko pod
neyo zasnulol!
Oi, vy lesa, nebesa, da
tuchi,
Tem, veterok, da snezhok
letuchii!
Sveites pelenoyu, snezhnoi,
pukhovoyu;
Eyu, kak mladentsa, starichka
prikroyu...
Spi, moi druzhok, muzhichok
schastlivyi,
Leto prishlo, rastsvelo!

Forests and glades, not a soul in
sight.
A blizzard wails and howls.
In the darkness of
night,
it is as if someone is being
buried by some evil force:
just look – it is so! in the
darkness,
death tenderly embraces a peasant,
leading the drunken man in a
lively dance,
and singing this song in his ear:
'Oh, poor peasant, pitiful old
man,
drunk and stumbling on your
way,
and the blizzard, like a witch,
rose up and raged,
driving you by chance from the
field into the deep woods.
Oppressed by grief and sadness
and want,
lay down, rest and sleep, my dear!
I will warm you, my friend, with
a cover of snow,
weaving a great game around
you.
Whip up a bed, oh swan-like
snowstorm!
Hey, you elements, strike up a song,
spin a tale that will last all
night,
so that that old drunk might
sleep soundly to its strains!
Hey, you woods and heavens
and storm clouds,
darkness and winds and driving
snow!
Spin him a shroud of downy
snow,
and I will swathe the old man,
like a new-born child...
Sleep my friend. you fortunate
peasant,
summer has come, all in bloom!

Nad nivoi solnyshko smeyotsya
da serpy glyayut,
Pesenka nesyoysya, golubki
letayut...

The sun smiles down on the
cornfield and the sickles glimmer,
a song wafts across the air and
the doves are flying... '

Loneliness

The leaves rustled sadly (1859 rev. 1863-6)

Aleksey Pleshcheyev

Listya shumeli unylo
V dubrave nochnoyu poroi;
Grob opustili v
mogilu,
Grob, ozaryonnyi lunoi.
Tikha, bez placha
zaryli
I udalilis vse proch,
Tolka sklonyas and
mogiloi,
Listya shumeli vsyu noch.

Sadly rustled the leaves
in the groves at night-time;
the coffin was lowered into the
grave,
the coffin, lit by the moon.
In silence, without tears, they
buried it,
and then everyone departed;
only the leaves, bending over
the grave,
rustled through the night.

Cum mortuis in lingua mortua from *Pictures from an Exhibition* (1874)

From *Sunless* (1874)

Arseniy Golenishchev-Kutuzov

Within four walls

Komnatka tesnaya, tikhaya, milaya,
Ten neproglyadnaya, ten
bezotvetnaya,
Duma glubokaya, pesnya unylaya,
V byushchemsya serdtse
nadezhda zavetnaya.

A small, quiet room, dear to me;
dark, unresponsive
shadows;
deep thoughts, a mournful song;
in my beating heart an intimate
hope.

Bystryi polyot za mgnovenyem
mgnoveniya,
Vzor nepodvizhnyi na schastye
dalyokoe,
Mnogo somneniya, mnogo
terpeniya,
Vot ona, noch moya, noch
odinokaya.

Swiftly the moments fly past,
one by one;
a gaze fixed on some distant
happiness;
many doubts, much
endurance -
such is my night, my solitary
night.

On the river

Mesyats zadumchivyi, zvyozdy
dalyokiye
S sinego neba vodami
lyubuyutsya.

The pensive moon and the
distant stars
gaze lovingly on the waters
from a dark blue sky.

Molcha smotryu ya na vody glubokiye: Tainy volshebnye serdtsem v nikh chuyutsya.	I too look silently into the deep waters: my heart senses the secret spell that they hold.
Pleshcuut, tayatsya, laskatelno nezhnye; Mnogo v ikh ropote sily charuyushchei: Slyshatsya dumy i strasti bezbrezhnye. Golos nevedomyi, dushu volnuyushchii.	Their ebb and flow is seductively tender, these sounds hold such power of enchantment: they suggest boundless thoughts and passions. Their mysterious voice disturbs the soul.
Nezhit, pugaet, navodit sommenie. Slushat velit-li on? s mesta-b ne sdvinulsya; Gonit-li proch? ubezhal-by v smyatenii. V glub-li zovyot? Bez oglyadki-b ya kinulsya! ...	It caresses and frightens, it engulfs me in doubt. Is it compelling me to listen? I would not move from here. Is it driving me away? I would run away in confusion. Is it summoning me into the depths? I would plunge in without hesitation! ...

Rêverie (1865)

Translations of 'A Society Tale: The Goat', 'Longing', 'From my tears', 'Hopak', 'Oh, how your eyes look at me sometimes' and 'Trepak' by Philip Ross Bullock. 'Night' and 'Sunless' by Andrew Huth.