

Khosiyat RUSTAMOVA
Poems

1.

Where did you go as so many years passed?
Was life a long and bleak dream for you?
Why couldn't you knock on my door at last -
Maybe once as you chanced to pass through?
I just can't stay in this world any more.
I've put on my coat and I'm ready to go!
But you remain behind in my life as before -
Like a host seeing me off at the door for show.

2.

I am leaving the road of life right now.
I am merely an artist's tired sketch.
It maybe a bird, but it's on my brow,
Or perhaps my raw mother's milk made me retch.
Who can I hate?
Who can I complain to?
Where in this moment should I be?
Is that why this poem is tasteless pain too?
Is that why it's utterly rotten...maybe?

3.

When I will come here again?
What will my visit mean?
I'm trembling so hard again
Like waves out on the seas...
If only I were roaming
Through this world's glittering sheen,
Like the tent of a Gipsy,
Like characters in Chinese.

4.

The wind came by chance and departed swiftly.
My window panes took a deep breath and sighed.
I was walking along the street rather casually
But it tipped my fragile heart on its side.
Where would it take me, and to which street,
As it overturned my life of before?
Yet my fear dispersed like a mist at my feet.
And there was no trace of my past anymore.

Oh how much I loved you that day!
The trees on the streets and the moon saw it all!
Its long silvery beams were showing the way,

The Earth is deeper than me as I fall...
My mind was confused, my heart was quivering
The window of my soul was blown open too.
But luckily, you were above me delivering
Luckily it was you... it was you...

5.
Sometimes the wind is cross And turns the opposite way.
It rolls its eyes at a loss
Like grapes turn through the day.
The dry leaves of a bird's nest In deep puddles decay.
Empty nuts fill the breast
Of autumn passing away. Xosiyat Rustamova poems

6.
The dark, stormy sky has got darker still,
It's impossible to see to the other side.
The whole world has become dark-filled;
Even your big old house seems to hide.
It's long until dawn and the wind gusts high.
The dessicated leaves will not recover.
Until summer now, the trees must rely
On the ground, as autumn is over.
The moon's come up. I can believe
Its light still won't entirely stop.
It seems that it forgot to grieve
And hangs baffled above your rooftop.

7.
i want to shout and yet I stay quiet.
I'm forever retreating to the back of the stage.
But a tiny snowdrop shows no fright -
It's cracked through the soil for many an age.
Where and where does it find the will?
It's not scared of rocks, wind nor rain.
Yet there are such heavy feet still
That can pound a head in the ground again.
I am burning. My heart's full of fire.
Doomsday is blazing in my soul's glass!
But please God, there is just one thing I desire:
To have at least the strength of grass.

8.

A tongue alone cannot endure,
It can never behave.
It is impossible to keep pure
The myriad voices the universe gave.
Fields and steppes may run amok,
But the stone sleeps calmly through.
And trees keep their steady stock
Against the wind's tattoo.

9.

You're staring! Did you have something to say?
I see your shadow on the floor in front of me.
Your light comes through my window anyway –
No matter how hard you try, I can still see.
It's like this each day: from the dawn skies,
Before the early breeze starts to arise,
Without hesitation, the thick-faced sun
Touches each of my windows one by one.
The gardens give all their love out
To the whole world roundabout.
But that stain from the sun will remain
In my carefully cleaned window pane.

10.

The wind can't shift the Earth from its place,
A hurricane cannot stop the sea.
And Life! For all your famous face,
You really won't find killing easy.
Lightning cannot smash the sky.
Autumn cannot uproot trees.
My head is on the block, oh my -
Face to face with its decease.
You looked harmless from outside.
Are we that different, do you think?
But don't go drowning in the tide –
A cold fish can't drown or sink.

11.

Are you leaving now?
Tell me you won't leave.
If you leave me, there's no place left here for me.
And now the wind's getting up, I believe.
It would be best...

Best if you didn't leave me.
After all, it's already dark,
And the roads are dark.
The clouds crowd together -
There'll be rainy weather.
Stop! Or shall I go with you
As we leave this world forever?

12.

No, it will be different that day -
Even though the sun will rise in the skies.
And autumn will still turn the gardens grey.
That day will be different in my eyes.
There is talk of death - but I'll hold my tongue still;
I will listen to every sound in its way.
Yes, I wish that the day I die will
Not be at all like any other day.

13.

On my birthday
You can hear my heart slowly breaking.
That means my blood's still going round!
But my survival, friends, was always taking
Its toll, ripping flowers from the ground.
Now what's going on? What's this retribution?
Why haven't you stopped picking flowers?
So even my corpse is no solution -
Wiping out another troop of flowers.

14.

For the soft fur in the hat on my head,
The king of the forests had to die.
And how many rabbits are now dead
For each of the warm coats I buy?
Life's spending out so much for me,
Perhaps I should grow older faster.
This turquoise scarf, the hue of sea,
Is a memento of a mermaid's disaster,
And my handbag glows like eagle feathers.
The sea spreads pearls in my heart.
And in boots of crocodile leather
I will stride out so proudly smart.
I'll refresh my body again today,
O how much luxury means to me!
And life and all its creatures lie

Buried in me every day.

15.

I am going...
Like a bullet that missed its mark.
I had the world in my hand - then squeezed.
I shot out from the crowded park -
I raised my aim as high as I pleased.
But what have I seen in forty years?
Is that my whole life? It's not a big deal.
I swear all is vain - that's how it appears.
But love, my love alone, was real.

16.

Drugs
You write...All night...
Drinking henbane -
Don't be scared if I suddenly open the door!
We've no homeland, but we've a home again -
If they don't take it away any more.
Let me go to the kitchen and get hot tea.
Let's not be frightened...neither me... nor you, dear.
We are still together, you and me -
If we don't have life, then death is here.

17.

I am confused and wandering in my heart,
Like a beggar stretching his hands in hope.
Tell me, when did it happen? When did I depart?
When I did I step out on my heart's tightrope?
It's so hard to drag my small soul along,
It seems I'm engulfed in blood entirely.
Darling, you went away, too - or am I wrong?
Did God simply forget about me?

18.

The dawn is breaking;
Night drops away.
Everything's quiet;
Nothing is moving.
Dew wets the grass;
Brown leaves decay.
And even the birds
Dare not to sing.
Fog rolls in thick,

Cloaking the grass.
Trees float away;
And day is soon dying.
Axes are hungry to chop
Knives want blood fast.
In this reign of darkness,
The sun's given up trying.

19.

You're exhausted... I know
Are you in pain?
The breeze is bewitchingly tugging your hair.
Compassion soon washes over me again
But i covet your fatigue - please let me share.
The fine soil shivers softly in your hand.
Your tongue cushions an unknown name.
Yes. I'm even jealous of the shivering sand
Which sits there free of anxiety or blame.
How was it then the soil made you?
Let my voice reach you, or not maybe.
I want come to this earth, it's true;
It's always been so close to me.

20.

The horses are sent out at the break of day.
Excited, they whinny and neigh to the skies.
But there is one horse that seems to hang back on the way.
Treading tiredly; there's no light in his eyes.
He refuses food and water, flinching
As if a bomb had just gone off nearby,
As if in his mind he saw the killing
Of all horses in wars gone by.

21.

Oh, I haven't seen you for days, it seems.
My dark hair's been smothered by snow
But i saw you clearly there in my dreams.
Will you appear here for real, though?
I'm muttering away with the thrill - and how!
My heart is pounding like mad!
Dawn is coming. What do I do now?
Should I wash out the dreams I had?

22.

Like the last leaf on the cherry tree

I'm in a bad way - bloody hell!
Rotting in my neighbour's yard gradually,
The worm in the apple that fell.
Like dust and leaves blown haphazardly
My soul's tossed, but the wind pays no heed.
Today the sky bears heavily down on me
Tomorrow a black land will be torture indeed.

23.

Slowly approaches the oil-grey morn.
Slowly the blood curdles in the vein.
A tree cries. It's not yet dawn
In the prison of my brain.
Time has set like concrete,
Locking in sorrow and pain.
Everything's old.
Nothing mete -
Just the smell of blood again.

24.

Maybe you can make a snowgirl
Everyday, the gardens are lovely here -
Though the ravens are starving, you can tell.
And the street is beautiful - look, my dear!
Are you watching through your window as well?
The sky's deep white;
The snow's soft as down.
Maybe you can make a girl from snow?
Oh, how can i get to you across town -
The roads are still buried, I know!

25.

Fate has always blessed me.
Imaginary melodies touched my art.
But the most precious will always be
The gift of you, my beating heart!
I've had so many happy years
From friends who gave me their belief.
But my time is run now it appears –
My little life seemed very brief!
But this soul is not mine you see -
I do not own this breath.
Allah gave this life to me -
And mine doesn't end with death.

26.

How many sins have I committed?
Where did my hopes fail?
Why like a serving criminal
Is life holding me in jail?

27.

At the Airport

Are you looking?
My luggage is such a weight!
My heart is pounding in my breast.
I'm not sobbing this time at the gate.
Only... I must go faster to pass the test.
But something trembles now inside me –
There's involuntary quivering of my lip.
You look so very, very sad, I see -
As if I'm leaving for my final trip.

28.

The dog was coming after me.
Everyone looks amazed -
For the first time it seems to be,
My heart is battered and dazed.
I'm saddened by the gardens here
I'm sad that I've found out.
I had entirely no idea
There were so many dogs about.
I was scared of dogs.
But dogs are not men -
They won't knife you in the back.
Dogs are dogs in my eyes, then.
And won't give you a heart attack.
It was there again today -
The dog that chases me.
These dogs are smart in every way.
I'm really scared, Mummy!

29.

Akhmatova

The sky is melting, melting like snow,
As I burn my body away.

Well, that's it. It's over, you know –
No more happiness to lead me astray.
The sky is turning in my head,
Lifting me off my feet.
Without restraint, I'm simply lead
To the poem your eyes complete.
Noone has ever read these lines,
Even in an unwritten book.
My dear, thank you for these signs –
Will I die if ever look?
If time at some point happens to freeze,
And the clock at last hits a wall.
Happiness just embrace me.
I want nothing else at all.

30.

I really lived today –
Death didn't come near.
I managed to carve my name on the stone.
Yet there's nothing here in this life it's clear
Except myself - yes, I'm on my own.
And I must stay on heavy feet of clay.
Only far above me the sky is unfurled.
So I just cannot say there is any other way
But, my soul, to live in this world.

Translated from the Uzbek? by John Farndon