

### 1. Oleg Chukhontsev

With your name, I shall name this homeless year  
The mottled background of our wanderings.

The night in the window, the lamp on the wall,  
And the morass of customs strange to me.

With your name I shall name the river's flood,  
Life overflowing, with a touch of sadness.

And even if you leave me, I'll not die.  
...And the shade in the heat, and the finch in the wood.

And even if you leave me, I shall know  
That you'll come running back, once named,

And you will never even guess  
That I'm not lonely, though alone,

And that your spirit shares my isolation.  
...And the night in the window, and the lamp on the wall.

*(Trans: Simon Franklin)*

### 2. Osip Mandelstam

This is what I want most of all:  
With no one on my track  
To soar behind the light  
That I couldn't be farther from.

And for you to shine in that sphere-  
There is no other happiness-  
And learn from a star  
What light could mean.

And I would like to say to you,  
My little one, mumbling:  
It's by means of our babbling  
That I hand you the light

A star can only be a star,  
Light can only be light,  
Because whispering warms us  
And babbling makes us strong.

*(Trans: James Greene)*

### 3. Dmitri Merezhkovsky

I love or I don't - despair comes easily to me:  
Though I may never be yours,  
Nonetheless there's such a tenderness at times  
In your eyes, as though I am loved.

Not by me you'll live, not by me you'll suffer,  
And I will pass like the shadow of clouds;  
But you will never forget me,  
And my distant call will not die out in you.

We dreamt of mysterious joy,  
And we knew in the dream that it was a dream...  
But nevertheless there's agonizing sweetness  
For you even in this, that I'm not he.

*(Trans. Albert C. Todd)*

### 4. Nicolai Otsup

The whole room with two windows save,  
With a bed for sleep and love's thrill,  
Like driftwood, is borne by a wave  
Call the wave what you will.

And, if with heaven in my eyes,  
I press your body, then know  
It's only fear that tries,  
Not to drown below.

*(Trans. Albert C. Todd)*

### 5. Mikhail Kuzmin

If they say: "you must suffer both torture and burning"-  
I shall joyously sing on the stake that will finish my life-  
Obedient.

If I had to abandon my singing forever,  
I would silently offer my tongue and my hands to the knife-  
Obedient.

If they said: "you will never again be together"-  
I would strengthen my love and would know how to master my  
fate-  
Obedient.

If they forced me to suffer the torments of final betrayal,  
My voyage was long - I would really enter the straight-  
Obedient.

But if they forbid us our love - on that day  
I shall not believe in the ban, and will not obey.

*(Trans: Yakov Hornstein)*

*With Your Name* by Oleg Chukhontsev, *I Love or I Don't* by Dmitri Merezhkovsky, *If they say* by Mikhail Kuzmin, *The Whole Room* by Nicolai Otsup from *20th CENTURY RUSSIAN POETRY* by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Copyright (C) 1993 by Doubleday, a division of Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. Used by permission of Doubleday, a division of Random House, Inc.

*This is what I want* by Osip Mandelstam  
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