

## LERMONTOV'S LYRICS OF 1840-1841

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### Annotation

In the novel "Hero of Our Time" M. Yu. Lermontov said: "The history of the human soul... is perhaps more curious and useful than the history of an entire People." Not only Lermontov thought so, but also the whole generation of people of the 1840s, to which he belonged. They contrasted the energy of political action that inspired the generation of Decembrists with the energy of self-knowledge. At the same time, "The History of the Human Soul" was in no way opposed to the "history of the people."

**Key words:** *Lermontov's creative heritage, the criticism of Russian symbolism, Russian symbolism, religious and philosophical criticism, Sophian myth, reception, mythologization, «Lermontov's a myth».*

On June 11, 1840, Lermontov arrived in Stavropol, where the headquarters of the Russian troops were located. And on June 18, he was sent to the left flank of the Caucasian line. During the storming of the blockages on the Valerik River (in Chechen - "river of death"), Lermontov fought courageously and with the "front ranks of the bravest broke" into the enemy's rear. For his distinction in combat, he was nominated for awards three times, but none of the nominations received "the monarch's permission". Lermontov's poem "Valerik" is dedicated to the bloody battle on the "river of death", in which the poet showed the cruel seamy side of the war:

*Everything had already become quiet; the bodies  
Were dragged into a heap; the blood flowed  
In a smoky stream over the stones,  
The air was full of its heavy vapor. The general  
Sat in the shade on a drum  
And received reports.  
The surrounding forest, as if in a fog,  
Was blue in the gunpowder smoke,  
And there in the distance, in a disorderly ridge,  
But eternally proud and calm,  
The mountains stretched out - and Kazbek  
He flashed his pointed head,  
And with secret and heartfelt sadness  
I thought: "A pathetic man,  
What does he want!.. the sky is clear,  
There is plenty of room under the sky for everyone,  
But incessantly and in vain  
He alone is at enmity - why?.."*

The poems are striking in their contrast between the majestic harmony, the solemn beauty of the surrounding nature and the monstrous, hideous cruelty of man, possessed by the spirit of senseless hostility and malice. Leo Tolstoy admired these poems. He used the motifs of "Valerik" in the story "Sevastopol in May", in the epic novel "War and Peace" - in the

description of the Battle of Austerlitz, in other episodes emphasizing the inhumane nature of war. Lermontov fought, risked his life. Meanwhile, his novel "A Hero of Our Time" was published in St. Petersburg, the success of which exceeded all expectations. The book was sold out immediately, a second edition was being prepared. In November 1840, the first edition of "Poems" [1. p. 145] by M. Yu. Lermontov appeared, to which Belinsky responded with a large and intelligent article. Lermontov's grandmother, with the help of influential Petersburg relatives and acquaintances, tried to obtain forgiveness and rescue her grandson from exile. But she only managed to get a two-month leave ticket. In early February 1841, Lermontov arrived in Petersburg. The two months flew by. They began to ask for a deferment. Thanks to high patronage, this was possible. Lermontov really did not want to return to the Caucasus at that time. He submitted a letter of resignation in the hope of devoting himself entirely to literature, opening his own magazine... But one morning, the duty officer of the General Staff woke him up and ordered him to pack up and leave Petersburg for the Caucasus to his place of service within 48 hours. [2. p. 105]

When leaving, Lermontov left his poem "Rodina" with A. A. Kraevsky at the editorial office of the journal "Otechestvennye Zapiski". On March 13, 1841, Belinsky wrote to V. P. Botkin: "If his "Rodina" is published, then... what a Pushkin thing, that is, one of Pushkin's best." Here Lermontov calls his love for Russia "strange" because its roots are deep, beyond the reach of reason. Here, for the first time, Lermontov formulated the Russian, heartfelt feeling of patriotism, about which F. I. Tyutchev, a poet of Lermontov's generation, would say:

*Russia cannot be understood with the mind,  
It cannot be measured with a common yardstick:  
It has a special character -  
You can only believe in Russia.*

The Russian keeps his main sacred things in his heart. Even in the "smart prayer" addressed to the Savior, our righteous taught to "immerse the "mind" in the "heart" and from this depth and fullness of spiritual forces, uniting reason, feeling, will and intuition, to raise a prayerful word to Him. Lermontov says that all the usual attributes of patriotism: "the cherished traditions of dark antiquity", "glory bought with blood", pride in the fatherland and devotion to it - do not yet constitute the deep core of such love, but lie on the surface of the soul of a Russian. He does not deny these feelings, as is commonly believed, but says that the main joy, the primary source of love for the homeland is not mental, not abstract, but figurative, living, objective. This is what Lermontov tries to express in his poems. First, he recreates a wide, spatially open image of Russia, captured as if from the height of an eagle's flight:

*But I love - for what, I don't know myself -  
Her cold silence of the steppes,  
Her boundless forests swaying,  
Her rivers spilling like seas...*

And suddenly from this celestial height the poet descends, folding his wings and clinging to his native land, with its country roads, with the concrete signs of its inconspicuous but spiritual beauty:

*I love to ride along country roads in a cart  
And, piercing the shadow of the night with a slow gaze,  
Meeting on the sides, sighing for a night's lodging,  
The trembling lights of sad villages.*

The details and particulars of the poet's impressions of the road - "a couple of white birches", "stubble", now shabby, straw-roofed huts, now signs of contentment and labor in a "full threshing floor", in "carved shutters" - glide and shine through in space, merging with the integral image of Russia, the scale and boundless breadth of which are set at the very beginning. Precise details combine visible concreteness with deep psychologism, rising to artistic symbolism. Such are, for example, the "trembling lights of sad villages." On the one hand, this is a picturesque and plastic image conveying the movement of a traveler along a hilly night country road, when lights in the distance sometimes appear, sometimes disappear. [3. p. 151] And at the same time, a soul-stirring sadness arises from the meagerly glowing, trembling life, lost in the distant distances, in the boundless spaces of Russia. There is another compositional movement in the poem - closer and closer to the center, to the heart of the eternally reviving Russian life: "a full threshing floor," "a hut with carved shutters." The poet approaches a peasant family nest and freezes, enchanted, on the threshold of the village hut:

*And on a holiday, in the dewy evening,  
I am ready to watch until midnight  
A dance with stomping and whistling  
To the chatter of drunken peasants.*

Lermontov and all Russian poetry in "Rodina" brings to that threshold, beyond which the inexhaustible depth of the people's life will soon open. He will be replaced by Nekrasov - a poet who listens to the talk of peasants, including this talk in his poems. The traditions of Lermontov's "Rodina" will live on in Russian poetry of the 20th century. In the hard times of the Great Patriotic War, they will awaken, for example, in the poems of K. Simonov "Do you remember, Alyosha, the roads of Smolensk..."

Lermontov's last poems are filled with fatal premonitions. Such, for example, is his "Dream", written in Pyatigorsk, where the poet was left by a military doctor for treatment:

*In the midday heat in the valley of Dagestan  
With lead in my chest I lay motionless;  
The deep wound was still smoking,  
My blood was oozing drop by drop.*

But these premonitions sounded especially piercingly and authentically in the poem "I go out alone on the road...", created in the few days before the tragedy that happened to him. The verses are built on a deep contrast, almost dissonance. At first, the poet depicts a wonderful, almost cosmic picture of the harmony of nature, pacified, sensitively listening to the voice of the Creator. The poet himself feels in his soul a kinship and involvement in the blessed union of earth and sky, pacifying the excitement and anxiety of the rebellious heart:

*I go out alone on the road;  
The flinty path shines through the fog;  
The night is quiet. The desert listens to God,  
And star speaks to star.*

It seems that the earth and sky are ready to embrace the soul of the exhausted poet. The beginning of the poem recalls the poetry of maternal love, so heartfully conveyed by him once in the "Cossack Lullaby":

*Sleep, my beautiful baby,  
Bayushki-bayu.  
The clear moon quietly looks*

*Into your cradle...*

And now all of nature is at one with the poet, dozing in its cradle, wrapped in blue radiance, listening to the "lullaby" of the Creator. But the acquired harmony is interrupted by a painful dissonance - almost a groan of an exhausted soul:

***Why is it so painful and so difficult for me?***

It would seem that what the poet was so constantly and persistently searching for is now given to him by the calming beauty of the slumbering night, freely and serenely spread out under the stars. But no! The poet is looking for another, eternal harmony, the existence of which is only hinted at by the peacefully sleeping earth and the stars talking to each other. He needs another peace, free from the power of inexorable time, from the weight of earthly shackles. His soul rushes to where no one has ever returned, beyond the boundaries of earthly existence. Lermontov not only sensed death approaching him, but he himself was drawn to it. [5. p. 45] And chance... - it did not take long to come. A friend from the cadet school, Martynov, turned up in Pyatigorsk. A caustic joke, which Lermontov never skimmed on, was enough to challenge the poet to a duel.

On July 15, at about five o'clock in the evening, a terrible storm with lightning and thunder broke out. And at that very moment, Lermontov, who had refused to shoot Martynov, was killed by him five steps away - in the chest, right through - between the mountains Mashuk and Beshtau...

During his St. Petersburg period of 1838-1840, Lermontov turned to poetry about the purpose of a poet and poetry. In the poem "The Poet" (1838), he compares poetry to a weapon of war, a reliable defender of truth and a fighter against humiliation and insults, long hidden in a sheath and rusting in neglect and inaction:

In our pampered age, haven't you, poet,  
Lost your purpose,  
Having exchanged for gold that power to which the world  
Listened in silent reverence?  
It used to be that the measured sound of your mighty words  
Inflamed the fighter for battle.  
The crowd needed it, like a bowl for feasts,  
Like incense during hours of prayer.  
Your verse, like God's spirit, hovered over the crowd;  
And, the response of noble thoughts,  
Sounded like a bell on the veche tower,  
In days of celebrations and national troubles.

The poet appeals to his fellow writers (military weapons!) with a call to wake up, awaken the prophetic gift in themselves and snatch from the sheath "the blade, covered with the rust of contempt."

In a later poem, "The Prophet" (1841), Lermontov picks up Pushkin's tradition, but gives it a different, tragic sound. Lermontov's prophet tries to fulfill in practice that Divine call that Pushkin's prophet received - "And, going around seas and lands, burn the hearts of people with a verb":

I began to proclaim love  
And the pure teachings of truth:  
All my neighbors  
Frantically threw stones at me.

Lermontov's prophet is reviled and not accepted by the world. Instead of a heartfelt response to his fiery words, he received hatred and contempt from people. In their weakness, they did not want to listen to his words calling them to good deeds of love and truth. Weak-willed and lazy, it is much easier for them to accuse the prophet of pride and incompatibility than to take upon themselves the heavy cross of fighting evil in the name of the triumph of goodness and light. And the desecrated prophet is forced to leave people:

I sprinkled ashes on my head,  
I fled from the cities as a beggar,  
And now in the desert I live,  
Like birds, on the gift of God's food.

The prophet turned away from people, leaving them to themselves, with all their weaknesses and base desires. The sphere of his action was limited to the world of nature:

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