In VN’s novel *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974) Vadim calls his last love “You” and refers to himself as “I” (according to an old rule mentioned by Vadim, “the I of the book cannot die in the book,” 7.1). *Ty i ya* (“You and I,” 1820) is a poem by Pushkin. In the poem’s last lines Pushkin mentions *kolenkor* (calico with which the tsar Alexander I wipes up his fat Afedron) and Khvostov’s tough ode (with which the poet wipes, wincing, his sinful hole):

Окружён рабов толпой,
С грозным деспотизма взором,
Афедрон ты жирный свой
Подтираешь коленкором;
Я же грешную дыру
Не балую детской модой
И Хвостова жёсткой одой,

Хоть и морщуся, да тру.

Surrounded by a crowd of slaves,

With a formidable look of despotism,

You wipe up with calico

Your fat Afedron.

As to me, with children’s fashion

I don’t pamper my sinful hole

and wipe it, wincing,

with Khvostov’s tough ode.

Calico brings to mind Kalikakov (a comedy name: from *kal*, “excrement,” and *kakat’*, “to defecate”), a Soviet spy mentioned by Vadim:

Brushing all my engagements aside, I surrendered again--after quite a few years of abstinence!--to the thrill of secret investigations. Spying had been my *clystère de Tchékhov* even before I married Iris Black whose later passion for working on an interminable detective tale had been sparked by this or that hint I must have dropped, like a passing bird's lustrous feather, in relation to my experience in the vast and misty field of the Service. In my little way I have been of some help to my betters. The tree, a blue-flowering ash, whose cortical wound I caught the two "diplomats," Tornikovski and Kalikakov, using for their correspondence, still stands, hardly scarred, on its hilltop above San Bernardino. But for structural economy I have omitted that entertaining strain from this story of love and prose. Its existence, however, helped me now to ward off--for a while, at least--the madness and anguish of hopeless regret. (5.1)

The name Khvostov comes from *khvost* (tail). In his poem *Skazka dlya detey* (“Fairy Tale for Children,” 1841) Lermontov says that he courageously catches his verse *za khvost* (by its tail):

Стихов я не читаю — но люблю
Марать шутя бумаги лист летучий;
Свой стих за хвост отважно я ловлю;
Я без ума от тройственных созвучий
И влажных рифм — как например на Ю.
Вот почему пишу я эту сказку.
Её волшебно-тёмную завязку
Не стану я подробно объяснять,
Чтоб кой-каких допросов избежать,
Зато конец не будет без морали,
Чтобы её хоть дети прочитали. (2)

According to Lermontov, he is *bez uma ot troystvennykh sozvuchiy* *i vlazhnykh rifm* – *kak naprimer na Yu* (crazy about triple accords and moist rhymes – as for example on *Yu*). The penultimate letter of the Russian alphabet, Ю (*Yu*) is pronounced rather like “you.” The alphabet’s last letter, Я (*Ya*), is also the first person pronoun (that corresponds to English I).

In Pushkin’s poem “You and I” you is the tsar Alexander I. In the last line of his poem *K byustu zavoevatelya* (“To the Bust of a Conqueror,” 1829) Pushkin says that Alexander I was *v litse i v zhizni arlekin* (an harlequin in face and in life):

Напрасно видишь тут ошибку:

Рука искусства навела

На мрамор этих уст улыбку,

А гнев на хладный лоск чела.

Недаром лик сей двуязычен.

Таков и был сей властелин:

К противочувствиям привычен,

В лице и в жизни арлекин.

It's wrong to see a clumsy style

The hand of art has truly wrought

Both marble lips that seem to smile

And brows that frown in angry thought.

This two-faced look he never shed,

For so he was, this potentate:

On inner conflicts he was fed,

A harlequin in face and fate.

In his poem Pushkin describes Thorvaldsen’s “Bust of Alexander I” (1820). The sculptor’s name brings to mind Tornikovski, a Soviet spy who used a blue-flowering ash for his correspondence with Kalikakov. *Yasen’. Videnie* *dreva* (“The Ash. Vision of a Tree,” 1916) is a collection of poetry by Balmont. The fourth poem in it is entitled *Zverinoe chislo* (“The Number of the Beast”). In his poem *Zasnula chern’. Ziyaet ploshchad’ arkoy…* (“The mob fell asleep. The square gapes with the arch…” 1913) Mandelshtam mentions *Arlekin* (the Harlequin, presumably, the tsar Paul I) and *Aleksandr* (presumably, the tsar Alexander I) who was tormented by the Beast:

Заснула чернь. Зияет площадь аркой.
Луной облита бронзовая дверь.
Здесь Арлекин вздыхал о славе яркой,
И Александра здесь замучил зверь.

Курантов бой и тени государей:
Россия, ты — на камне и крови —
Участвовать в твоей железной каре
Хоть тяжестью меня благослови!

The mob fell asleep. The square gapes with the arch.

The bronze door is spilled by the moon.

Here the Harlequin dreamt of bright fame

And Alexander was tormented by the Beast.

The chiming clock and the shades of sovereigns:

Russia, on your stone and blood,

Bless me with your heaviness

To participate in your iron punishment.

Balmont’s *Sonety solntsa, myoda i luny* (“The Sonnets of Sun, Honey and Moon,” 1921) include a cycle of four sonnets entitled “Lermontov.” In Chekhov’s play *Tri sestry* (“The Three Sisters,” 1901) Solyony (who kills Baron Tuzenbakh in a pistol duel) imagines that he resembles Lermontov. On Demonia (aka Antiterra, Earth’s twin planet on which VN’s novel *Ada*, 1969, is set) Chekhov’s play is known as *Four Sisters* (2.1, *et passim*). Chekhov (who was born in Taganrog, a city where Alexander I died in 1825) died in 1904 at the age of forty-four. The first of Vadim’s three or four successive wives, Iris Black writes a detective novel and shows to Vadim a typewritten sheet numbered 444:

One afternoon, in March or early April, 1930, she peeped into my room and, being admitted, handed me the duplicate of a typewritten sheet, numbered 444. It was, she said, a tentative episode in her interminable tale, which would soon display more deletions than insertions. She was stuck, she said. Diana Vane, an incidental but on the whole nice girl, sojourning in Paris, happened to meet, at a riding school, a strange Frenchman, of Corsican, or perhaps Algerian, origin, passionate, brutal, unbalanced. He mistook Diana--and kept on mistaking her despite her amused remonstrations--for his former sweetheart, also an English girl, whom he had last seen ages ago. We had here, said the author, a sort of hallucination, an obsessive fancy, which Diana, a delightful flirt with a keen sense of humor, allowed Jules to entertain during some twenty riding lessons; but then his attentions grew more realistic, and she stopped seeing him. There had been nothing between them, and yet he simply could not be dissuaded from confusing her with the girl he once had possessed or thought he had, for that girl, too, might well have been only the afterimage of a still earlier romance or remembered delirium. It was a very bizarre situation.

Now this page was supposed to be a last ominous letter written by that Frenchman in a foreigner's English to Diana. I was to read it as if it were a real letter and suggest, as an experienced writer, what might be the next development or disaster.

*Beloved!*

*I am not capable to represent to myself that you really desire to tear up any connection with me. God sees, I love you more than life--more than two lives, your and my, together taken. Are you not ill? Or maybe you have found another? Another lover, yes? Another victim of your attraction? No, no, this thought is too horrible, too humiliating for us both. My supplication is modest and just. Give only one more interview to me! One interview! I am prepared to meet with you it does not matter where--on the street, in some cafe, in the Forest of Boulogne--but I must see you, must speak with you and open to you many mysteries before I will die. Oh, this is no threat! I swear that i  our interview will lead to a positive result, if, otherwise speaking, you will permit me to hope, only to hope, then, oh then, I will consent to wait a little. But you must reply to me without retardment, my cruel, stupid, adored little girl!*

*Your Jules*

"There's one thing," I said, carefully folding the sheet and pocketing it for later study, "one thing  the little girl should know. This is not a romantic Corsican writing a *crime passionnel* letter; it is a Russian blackmailer knowing just enough English to translate into it the stalest Russian locutions. What puzzles me is how did you, with your three or four words of Russian--*kak pozhivaete* and *do svidaniya*--how did you, the author, manage to think up those subtle turns, and imitate the mistakes in English that only a Russian would make? Impersonation, I know, runs in the family, but still--"

Iris replied (with that quaint non sequitur that I was to give to the heroine of my *Ardis* forty years later) that, yes, indeed, I was right, she must have had too many muddled lessons in Russian and she would certainly correct that extraordinary impression by simply giving the whole letter in French--from which, she had been told, incidentally, Russian had borrowed a lot of clichés. (1.12)

At the family dinner in Ardis (in *Ada*, Daniel Veen’s family estate) Marina (Van’s, Ada’s and Lucette’s mother) asks Demon (Van’s and Ada’s father) if his room number at the hotel is not 222 by any chance:

‘I had hoped you’d sleep here,’ said Marina (not really caring one way or another). ‘What is your room number at the hotel — not 222 by any chance?’

She liked romantic coincidences. Demon consulted the tag on his key: 221 — which was good enough, fatidically and anecdotically speaking. Naughty Ada, of course, stole a glance at Van, who tensed up the wings of his nose in a grimace that mimicked the slant of Pedro’s narrow, beautiful nostrils. (1.38)

444 + 222 = 666 (the number of the Beast).

Iris wants to incorporate in her novel a real letter that she received from her lover (who later kills her). The name of Iris’ lover and murderer, Wladimir Blagidze, *alias* Starov, has a Caucasian origin. In the first sonnet of his cycle “Lermontov” Balmont says that it is not by chance that Lermontov died in the Caucasus:

Опальный ангел, с небом разлучённый,
Узывный демон, разлюбивший ад,
Ветров и бурь бездомных странный брат,
Душой внимавший песне звёзд всезвонной, —

На празднике как призрак похоронный,
В затишьи дней тревожащий набат,
Нет, не случайно он среди громад
Кавказских — миг узнал смертельно-сонный.

Где мог он так красиво умереть,
Как не в горах, где небо в час заката —
Расплавленное золото и медь, —

Где ключ, пробившись, должен звонко петь,
Но также должен в плаче пасть со ската,
Чтоб гневно в узкой пропасти греметь.

Balmont calls Lermontov *vetrov i bur’ bezdomnykh strannyi brat* (a strange brother of homeless winds and storms). Vadim’s daughter Bel (whose name brings to mind Lermontov’s *Bela*) marries Charlie Everett who changes his name to Karl Vetrov and takes his wife to the Soviet Russia:

In the summer of 1960, Christine Dupraz, who ran the summer camp for disabled children between cliff and highway, just east of Larive, informed me that Charlie Everett, one of her assistants, had eloped with my Bel after burning--in a grotesque ceremony that she visualized more clearly than I--his  passport and a little American flag (bought at a souvenir stall especially for that purpose) "right in the middle of the Soviet Consul's back garden";  whereupon the new "Karl Ivanovich Vetrov" and the eighteen-year-old Isabella, a *ci-devant*'s daughter, had gone through some form of mock marriage in Berne and incontinently headed for Russia. (5.1)

*Ex-ci-devant* (1920) is a poem by Marina Tsvetaev (the wife of a double agent who in the late 1930s returned to Russia where she perished). In the opening line of the above quoted sonnet Balmont calls Lermontov *opal’nyi angel, s nebom razluchyonnyi* (a disgraced angel, separated from heaven). Vadim calls his assistant at Quirn University, Excul, “angelic Ex:”

Peppermill was to bring her [Vadim’s daughter Bel] on May 21, around four P.M. I had to fill somehow the abyss of the afternoon. Angelic Ex had already read and marked the entire batch of exams, but he thought I might want to see some of the works he had reluctantly failed. He had dropped in some time on the eve and had left them downstairs on the round table in the round room next to the hallway at the west end of the house. My poor hands ached and trembled so dreadfully that I could hardly leaf through those poor *cahiers*. The round window gave on the driveway. It was a warm gray day. Sir! I need a passing mark desperately. *Ulysses* was written in Zurich and Greece and therefore consists of too many foreign words. One of the characters in Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan* is the notorious actress Sarah Bernard. Stern's style is very sentimental and illiterative. A car door banged. Mr. Peppermill came with a duffel bag in the wake of a tall fair-haired girl in blue jeans carrying, and slowing down, to change from hand to hand, an unwieldy valise. (4.2)

Excul = Ex + *cul* (Fr., ass). “The notorious actress Sarah Bernard” (who does not appear but is mentioned in *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*) brings to mind a hilltop above San Bernardino where a blue-flowering ash (used by Tornikovski and Kalikakov for their correspondence) still stands.

In his memoir essay *Mladenchestvo* (“Infancy,” 1933) Hodasevich mentions “one contemporary poetess” (Marina Tsveatev) who considers Lermontov’s “Cossack Lullaby Song” her first poem:

Гораздо труднее мне было бы защитить другое стихотворение, сохранившееся в моей памяти. Оно было навеяно вербным торгом, который в то время устраивался на Театральной площади и лишь несколько позже был перенесен на Красную:

Весна! выставляется первая рама -
И в комнату шум ворвался,
И благовест ближнего храма,
И говор народа, и стук колеса.

На площади тесно ужасно,
И много шаров продают,
И ездиют мимо жандармы,
И вербы домой все несут.

Недостатки второй строфы очевидны. Первую же, как уже заметил читатель, я взял у Майкова - не потому, что хотел украсть, а потому, что мне казалось вполне естественным воспользоваться готовым отрывком, как нельзя лучше выражающим именно мои впечатления. Майковское четверостишие было мной пережито как моё собственное. В этом нет ничего удивительного. Одна современная поэтесса по той же самой причине первым своим стихотворением считает "Казачью колыбельную песню" Лермонтова.

Hodasevich quotes his own poem composed in childhood. Its first quatrain was borrowed in full from Apollon Maykov, the author of *Arlekin* (“The Harlequin,” 1854).

Tornikovski and Kalikakov are “diplomats.” In “Infancy” Hodasevich describes his walks with nurse and mentions the women *v tolstykh “diplomatakh”* (in heavy top coats?) who asked his nurse if she heard about some *mestechko* (job):

К няне моей то и дело подходили какие-то женщины в толстых "дипломатах" и непременно - с толстым клетчатым или серым платком на руке. Подсаживаясь, они каким-то льстивым и таинственным голосом говорили:

- Миленькая, не слыхали ли местечка?

Это "местечко" казалось мне чем-то таинственным, чем-то вроде сердечка: оно где-то бьётся часто и мелко, как часики, иногда его, вероятно, можно расслышать, но как и где, и почему именно няня могла его слышать, и зачем оно нужно всем этим женщинам?

In *Ada* Van Veen (the narrator and main character who was wounded in a pistol duel with Captain Tapper) uses the word *mestechko* in the sense “WC:”

‘How’s the wound?’

*‘Komsi-komsa.* It now appears that the Kalugano surgeon messed up his job. The rip seam has grown red and raw, without any reason, and there’s a lump in my armpit. I’m in for another spell of surgery — this time in London, where butchers carve so much better. Where’s the *mestechko* here? Oh, I see it. Cute (a gentian painted on one door, a lady fern on the other: have to go to the herbarium).’

In his essay on Bryusov (in “The Silhouettes of Russian Writers”) the critic Yuli Ayhenvald says that to live flowers Bryusov prefers herbarium:

И, однако, при этом зове к иссушению жизни, при этом предпочтении гербария цветам, Брюсов думает, что

Быть может, все в жизни — лишь средство
Для ярко-певучих стихов.

Но ведь родник певучести — непосредственность, и если нет последней, то не будет и первой; жизнь не претворится в стихи.

Van and Ada discover that they are brother and sister thanks to Marina’s old herbarium that they find in the attic of Ardis Hall (1.1).

In his memoir essay “Bryusov” (1925) Hodasevich mentions the attic where Bryusov learned to shoot a revolver (in order to thwart the strikers) and quotes the verses composed by Sergey Krechetov:

Пока фельетонисты писали статьи об обращении "эстета" Брюсова к "общественности", - Брюсов на чердаке своего дома учился стрелять из револьвера, "на случай, если забастовщики придут грабить". В редакции "Скорпиона" происходили беседы, о которых Сергей Кречетов сложил не слишком блестящие, но меткие стишки:

Собирались они по вторникам,

Мудро глаголя.

Затевали погромы с дворником

Из Метрополя.

Так трогательно по вторникам,

В согласии вкусов,

Сочетался со старшим дворником

Валерий Брюсов.

A phrase repeated by the epigram’s author twice, *po vtornikam* (on Tuesdays) rhymes with *s dvornikom* (with the yardman) and brings to mind Tornikovski.

In “Infancy” Hodasevich mentions Andrey Bely who in his poem *Pervoe Svidanie* (“The First Rendezvous,” 1921) rhymes *antrasha* (entrechat) with *professorsha* (a lady Professor):

Мне было лет шесть, когда сочинил я первое двустишие, выражавшее самую сущность тогдашних моих чувств:

Кого я больше всех люблю?
Ведь всякий знает - Женичку.

Не следует думать, что это двустишие вовсе лишено рифмы. В основу рифмоида "люблю - Женичку" положено очень верное чувство рифмы и ритма. В книжной поэзии я помню только один случай такой рифмовки дактилического окончания с мужским: "антраша" и "профессорша" у Андрея Белого в "Первом свидании".

Vadim calls *Dr. Olga Repnin* “my novel about the *professorsha*:”

Her husband sat in a deep armchair, reading a London weekly bought at the Shopping Center. He had not bothered to take off his horrible black raincoat--a voluminous robe of oilskin that conjured up the image of a stagecoach driver in a lashing storm. He now removed however his formidable spectacles. He cleared his throat with a characteristic rumble. His purple jowls wobbled as he tackled the ordeal of rational speech:

GERRY *Do you ever see this paper, Vadim* (accenting "Vadim" incorrectly on the first syllable)? *Mister* (naming a particularly lively criticule) *has demolished your* *Olga* (my novel about the *professorsha*; it had come out only now in the British edition).

VADIM *May I give you a drink? We'll toast him and roast him.*

GERRY *Yet he's right, you know. It is your worst book.* Chute complète*, says the man. Knows French, too.*

LOUISE *No drinks. We've got to rush home. Now heave out of that chair. Try again. Take your glasses and paper. There.* Au revoir*, Vadim*. I'll bring you those pills *tomorrow morning after I drive him to school*. (4.1)

Vadim’s novel *Dr. Olga Repnin* (1946) was preceded by *Esmeralda and her Parandrus* (1941). In “Infancy” Hodasevich describes his early passion for ballet and mentions Korovin’s *Esmeralda* (a ballet based on Victor Hugo’s novel *Notre Dame de* *Paris*):

В годы раннего моего балетоманства обстановочная часть находилась в руках "машиниста и декоратора" Вальца. Впоследствии к ней привлекли настоящих художников. С появлением Клодта и в особенности К. А. Коровина декорации и костюмы, разумеется, много выиграли в отношении художественном. Коровинская "Эсмеральда" была событием. Но должен признаться, что о пресечении вальцевской традиции мне порою хотелось вздохнуть. Постановки Вальца были отчасти безвкусны, но в них было столько таланта и волшебства, в самом их безвкусии было столько прелести, а в их наивном натурализме столько нечаянной и прелестной условности, что их всё-таки нельзя не назвать очаровательными. В 1921 году, в Петербурге, случилось мне видеть "Раймонду", поставленную в выцветших, "дореформенных" декорациях того же стиля, - это было необыкновенно хорошо.

In *Ada* Marina’s lover Pedro (whose name seems to hint at the tsar Peter I) is a ballet dancer. The characters in VN’s novel *Kamera obskura* (“Laughter in the Dark,” 1934) include von Korovin (a guest at the party given by Kretschmar). Valts (the decorator mentioned by Hodasevich) and *sobytie* (“the event,” as Hodasevich calls Korovin’s *Esmeralda*) bring to mind VN’s plays *Sobytie* (“The Event,” 1938) and *Izobretenie Val’sa* (“The Waltz Invention,” 1938).

The name Korovin comes from *korova* (cow). In *Ada* Marina offers Van a spot of tea and says that the cow (cow’s milk) is in the smaller jug:

Naked-faced, dull-haired, wrapped up in her oldest kimono (her Pedro had suddenly left for Rio), Marina reclined on her mahogany bed under a golden-yellow quilt, drinking tea with mare’s milk, one of her fads.

‘Sit down, have a spot of *chayku*,’ she said. ‘The cow is in the smaller jug, I *think*. Yes, it is.’ And when Van, having kissed her freckled hand, lowered himself on the *ivanilich* (a kind of sighing old hassock upholstered in leather): ‘Van, dear, I wish to say something to you, because I know I shall never have to repeat it again. Belle, with her usual flair for the right phrase, has cited to me the *cousinage-dangereux-voisinage adage* — I mean "adage," I always fluff that word — and complained *qu’on* *s’embrassait dans tous les coins*. Is that true?’ (1.37)

In his ‘Notes to *Ada*’ Vivian Darkbloom explains that a pouf plays a marvelous part in Tolstoy’s *Death of* *Ivan Ilyich*, where it sighs deeply under a friend of the widow’s. There is Bel in Belle (Lucette’s name of her governess, Mlle Larivière). The name Larivière brings to mind Larive (the summer camp for disabled children mentioned by Vadim is just east of Larive). Mlle Larivière, who writes fiction under the penname Guillaume de Monparnasse (according to Mlle Larivière, the leaving out of the ‘t’ made it more *intime*), is the Antiterran counterpart of Guy de Maupassant. Maupassant’s novel *Bel Ami* (1885) corresponds to *L’Ami Luc* by Guillaume de Monparnasse (3.2). Luc is *cul* backward. There is *cul* in cul-de-sac (dead end), a word used by Van when he describes Eric Veen’s floramors:

We shall always remember Little Lemantry near Rantchester or the Pseudotherm in the lovely cul-de-sac south of the viaduct of fabulous Palermontovia. (2.3)

Palermontovia blends Palermo with Lermontov. The author of an essay entitled “Villa Venus: an Organized Dream,” Eric Veen died and was buried in Ex (a place in Switzerland where Van was born):

It was now all over. The lorry had gone or had drowned, and Eric was a skeleton in the most expensive corner of the Ex cemetery (‘But then, all cemeteries are ex,’ remarked a jovial ‘protestant’ priest), between an anonymous alpinist and my stillborn double. (ibid.)

According to Van, Eric Veen derived his project from reading too many erotic works found in a furnished house his grandfather had bought near Vence from Count Tolstoy, a Russian or Pole. Maupassant’s story *Le Port* (1889) was translated into Russian by Leo Tolstoy as *Fransuaza* (1894). In his translation Tolstoy added one sentence, *Ona tvoya sestra* (“She is your sister”).

At the end of Pushkin’s tragedy “Boris Godunov” (1825) one of the people mentions *brat i sestra* (brother and sister) and the second person quotes the saying *yabloko ot yabloni nedaleko padaet* (“like parents, like children”):

Один из народа

Брат да сестра! бедные дети, что пташки в клетке.

Другой

Есть о ком жалеть? Проклятое племя!

Первый

Отец был злодей, а детки невинны.

Другой

Яблоко от яблони недалеко падает.

One of the people

Brother and sister! Poor children, like birds in a cage.

Second person

Are you going to pity them? Goddamned family!

First person

Their father was a villain, But the children are innocent.

 Second person

Like parents, like children.

In his translation of Maupassant’s *Le Port* Tolstoy renders the name of the ship, *Notre-Dame des Vents*, as *Bogoroditsa vetrov*. A character in Pushkin’s “Boris Godunov,” Nikolka (God’s fool) says that *Bogoroditsa* (Virgin Mary) forbids to pray for King Herod (a king of Judea who ordered the execution of children):

Юродивый

Борис, Борис! Николку дети обижают.

Царь

Подать ему милостыню. О чём он плачет?

Юродивый

Николку маленькие дети обижают... Вели их зарезать, как зарезал ты маленького царевича.

Бояре

Поди прочь, дурак! схватите дурака!

Царь

Оставьте его. Молись за меня, бедный Николка.

(Уходит.)

Юродивый

(ему вслед)

Нет, нет! нельзя молиться за царя Ирода — богородица не велит.

God’s Fool

Boris, Boris! The boys are hurting Nikolka.

Tsar

Give him alms! What is he crying for?

God's Fool

The little children are offending Nick. Let your butcher slay them, like you slayed the little Tsarevich.

Boyars

Get out of here, you fool! Seize the fool!

Tsar

Leave him alone. Pray for me, poor Nikolka.

(*Departs*)

God's Fool (*calling after him*)

No, no! I cannot pray for tsar Herod; the Blessed Virgin forbids it.

The characters in LATH include the poet Boris Morozov and the critic Boris Nyet (whom his archrival, Hristofor Boyarski, calls Prostakov-Skotinin). Prostakov and Skotinin are the characters in Fonvizin’s play *Nedorosl’* (“The Minor,” 1784). *Ten’ Fonvizina* (“The Shade of Fonvizin,” 1815) is a poem by Pushkin. Nyet (or *N’et*) is an anagram of *ten’* (“shade, shadow”). In “Boris Godunov” Grigoriy Otrepiev tells Marina Mnishek that the shade of Ivan the Terrible has adopted him. In her last note Aqua (in *Ada* Marina’s poor mad twin sister) mentions Nurse Joan the Terrible:

*Aujourd’hui (heute-*toity!) I, this eye-rolling toy, have earned the psykitsch right to enjoy a landparty with Herr Doktor Sig, Nurse Joan the Terrible, and several ‘patients,’ in the neighboring *bor* (piney wood) where I noticed exactly the same skunk-like squirrels, Van, that your Darkblue ancestor imported to Ardis Park, where you will ramble one day, no doubt. (1.3)

The names Aqua and Marina bring to mind *Akvamarin* (“The Aquamarine,” 1921), a sonnet included in Balmont’s “Sonnets of Sun, Honey and Moon.” In the last stanza of his poem *Nezhnee vsego* (“More Tenderly than Anything,” 1899) Balmont mentions *Pol’skaya panna* (a Polish maiden):

Нежнее того, что желанно

Огнём волшебства своего,—

Нежнее, чем Польская панна,

И, значит, нежнее всего.

Marina Mnishek (a character in “Boris Godunov”) is a Polish beauty. According to Vadim, it was Dagmara (a young mistress of Vadim’s Polish cousin Mstislav Charnetski) who showed him a fairy tale path winding through a great forest and who gave him a revolver that helped him to escape from Russia:

I was eighteen when the Bolshevist revolution struck—a strong and anomalous verb, I concede, used here solely for the sake of narrative rhythm. The recurrence of my childhood's disarray kept me in the Imperial Sanatorium at Tsarskoe for most of the next winter and spring. In July, 1918, I found myself recuperating in the castle of a Polish landowner, a distant relation of mine, Mstislav Charnetski (1880-1919?). One autumn evening poor Mstislav's young mistress showed me a fairy-tale path winding through a great forest where a last aurochs had been speared by a first Charnetski under John III (Sobieski). I followed that path with a knapsack on my back and--why not confess--a tremor of remorse and anxiety in my young heart. Was I right in abandoning my cousin in the blackest hour of Russia's black history? Did I know how to exist alone in strange lands? Was the diploma I had received after being examined by a special committee (presided by Mstislav's father, a venerable and corrupt mathematician) in all the subjects of an ideal lyceum, which I had never attended bodily, sufficient for Cambridge without some infernal entrance test? I trudged all night, through a labyrinth of moonlight, imagining the rustlings of extinct animals. Dawn at last miniated my ancient map. I thought I had crossed the frontier when a bare-headed Red Army soldier with a Mongol face who was picking whortleberries near the trail challenged me: "And whither," he asked picking up his cap from a stump, "may you be rolling (*kotishsya*), little apple (*yablochko*)? *Pokazyvay-ka dokumentiki* (Let me see your papers)."

I groped in my pockets, fished out what I needed, and shot him dead, as he lunged at me; then he fell on his face, as if sunstruck on the parade ground, at the feet of his king. None of the serried tree trunks looked his way, and I fled, still clutching Dagmara's lovely little revolver. Only half an hour later, when I reached at last another part of the forest in a more or less conventional republic, only then did my calves cease to quake. (1.2)

*Vetrov* (Gen. pl. of *veter*, “wind”) brings to mind Karl Ivanovich Vetrov (the new name of Bel’s husband). The characters in Tolstoy’s *Detstvo* (“Childhood,” 1852) and *Otrochestvo* (“Boyhood,” 1854) include Karl Ivanovich, the young hero’s old German tutor. At the beginning of *Ada* Van mentions *Detstvo i* *Otrochestvo*:

‘All happy families are more or less dissimilar; all unhappy ones are more or less alike,’ says a great Russian writer in the beginning of a famous novel *(Anna Arkadievitch Karenina,* transfigured into English by R.G. Stonelower, Mount Tabor Ltd., 1880). That pronouncement has little if any relation to the story to be unfolded now, a family chronicle, the first part of which is, perhaps, closer to another Tolstoy work, *Detstvo i Otrochestvo (Childhood and Fatherland,* Pontius Press, 1858). (1.1)

The characters in *Anna Karenin* (1877) include Stiva Oblonski, Anna Arkadievna’s brother whose surname resembles Vadim’s family name (presumably, Yablonski):

My next move--a visit to London--would have been altogether delightful, had I not been overwhelmed all the time by anxiety, impatience, anguished forebodings. Through several venturesome gentlemen--a former lover of Allan Andoverton's and two of my late benefactor's mysterious chums--I had retained some innocent ties with the BINT, as Soviet agents acronymize the well-known, too well-known, British intelligence service. Consequently it was possible for me to obtain a false or more-or-less false passport. Since I may want to avail myself again of those facilities, I cannot reveal here my exact alias. Suffice it to say that some teasing similarity with my real family name could make the assumed one pass, if I got caught, for a clerical error on the part of an absentminded consul and for indifference to official papers on that of the deranged bearer. Let us suppose my real name to have been "Oblonsky" (a Tolstoyan invention); then the false one would be, for example, the mimetic "O. B. Long," an oblong blursky, so to speak. This I could expand into, say, Oberon Bernard Long, of Dublin or Dumberton, and live with it for years on five or six continents. (5.1)

As to the name Kalikakov, it also brings to mind *kalos k’agathos* (beautiful and good), an epithet mentioned by K. N. Vasiliev-Bugaev (Andrey Bely’s widow) in her memoirs about her husband:

У Б. Н. был жизненный идеал человека, заветный и тайно хранимый. Он открыл его мне не сразу, а только после нескольких лет близости, в одну из тихих интимных минут; и назвал его греческим словом *kalos k'agathos (kalos kai agathos)* – прекрасный и добрый или *kalokagathos* – прекрасно-добрый (благой), в одно слово, как оно звучало для греков.

Этот утерянный ныне эпитет показывает, что они умели ещё не отделять красоту от добра и воспринимать их синтетически, одновременно, как внешнюю и внутреннюю сторону явлений.

*Blagoy* (“good,” a word used by the memoirist) brings to mind Annette Blagovo (Vadim’s second wife, Bel’s mother). Andrey Bely’s real name, Bugaev, comes from *bugay* (bull) and reminds one of Parandrus (an ox-sized animal from medieval bestiaries) and Oks (Osip Lvovich Oksman), a reformed terrorist who shows to Vadim a Russian lending library in Paris. Andrey Bely is the author of *Peterburg* (1913), a novel whose characters include the father and son Ableukhov (note the -bl- in their name) and the mad terrorist Dudkin. *Bely* means “white” and brings to mind Iris and Ivor Black. In Part Five of LATH Vadim describes his visit to Leningrad (St. Petersburg’s name in 1924-91) in the late nineteen-sixties. After his trip Vadim meets his last love, “You.” “You” and “I” in LATH bring to mind *On* (He), a third-person pronoun used by Hodasevich in “Infancy” to refer to his little self:

Как многие дети, я часто задумывался, не подкидыш ли я, и преисполнялся к себе жгучею жалостью. Порою после какой-нибудь неприятности я находил наслаждение в том, что изо всех сил бередил эту рану. Я запирался в самом отдалённом и отнюдь не для того предназначенном уголке квартиры и там, в тесноте, при свете огарка, предавался страшным мечтам. Мне виделись душераздирающие семейные сцены, навеянные чтением Диккенса и Шпильгагена. Я в них играл роль жертвы, столь несчастной и столь благородной, как только можно себе представить. При этом я думал о себе в третьем лице: "он". Каждый раз всё кончалось тем, что "он", произнеся самую сердцещипательную и самую самоотверженную речь в мире, всех примирив, всё устроив, всех сделав счастливыми, падал жертвою перенесённых страданий: "Сказав это, он приложил руку к сердцу, зашатался и упал мёртвым". Далее воображал я уже надгробные о себе рыдания - и сам начинал плакать. То были, однако, сладкие слёзы, очистительные, как все, проливаемые над вымыслом. Своё странное убежище я покидал умиротворённый и размягчённый сердечно, в некой духовной приподнятости, и давал себе слово впредь быть именно таким хорошим и великодушным, каким только что себя воображал.

Like many children, little Hodasevich often asked himself if he was not *podkidysh* (a foundling) and felt self-pity. In order to imagine and play heart-rending scenes, he locked himself in the most distant nook of the flat (the WC) where he thought of himself in the third person: “he.” Hodasevich mentions sweet tears that he shed over his invention.

A son of Count Starov, Vadim was adopted by the family of Prince Yablonski (who was killed in a pistol duel six months before Vadim’s birth) and brought up by an extraordinary grandaunt, Baroness Bredow, who summoned the boy to look at the harlequins:

I saw my parents infrequently. They divorced and remarried and redivorced at such a rapid rate that had the custodians of my fortune been less alert, I might have been auctioned out finally to a pair of strangers of Swedish or Scottish descent, with sad bags under hungry eyes. An extraordinary grand-aunt, Baroness Bredow, born Tolstoy, amply replaced closer blood. As a child of seven or eight, already harboring the secrets of a confirmed madman, I seemed even to her (who also was far from normal) unduly sulky and indolent; actually, of course, I kept daydreaming in a most outrageous fashion.

"Stop moping!" she would cry: "Look at the harlequins!

"What harlequins? Where?"

"Oh, everywhere. All around you. Trees are harlequins, words are harlequins. So are situations and sums. Put two things together--jokes, images--and you get a triple harlequin. Come on! Play! Invent the world! Invent reality!"

I did. By Jove, I did. I invented my grand-aunt in honor of my first daydreams, and now, down the marble steps of memory's front porch, here she slowly comes, sideways, sideways, the poor lame lady, touching each step edge with the rubber tip of her black cane. (1.2)

The name Bredow comes from *bred* (delirium; nonsense). At the end of his poem *Pod zemlyoy* (“Underground,” 1923) Hodasevich mentions *blestyashchiy bred* (bright delirium) and his *trost’* (cane):

И вот, из полутьмы глубокой

Старик сутулый, но высокий,

В таком почтенном сюртуке,

В когда-то модном котелке,

Идёт по лестнице широкой,

Как тень Аида, - в белый свет,

В берлинский день, в блестящий бред.

А солнце ясно, небо сине,

А сверху синяя пустыня...

И злость, и скорбь моя кипит,

И трость моя в чужой гранит

Неумолкаемо стучит.

*Starik sutulyi, no vysokiy* (“a stooping, but tall old man”) in Hodasevich’s poem brings to mind *Nikifor, blagorodneyshiy starik* (Nikifor, a fine old man) in Lebyadkin’s fable *Tarakan* (“The Cockroach”):

Жил на свете таракан,
Таракан от детства,
И потом попал в стакан,
Полный мухоедства.

— Господи, что такое? — воскликнула Варвара Петровна.
— То есть когда летом, — заторопился капитан, ужасно махая руками, с раздражительным нетерпением автора, которому мешают читать, — когда летом в стакан налезут мухи, то происходит мухоедство, всякий дурак поймёт, не перебивайте, не перебивайте, вы увидите, вы увидите… (Он всё махал руками).

Место занял таракан,
Мухи возроптали.
«Полон очень наш стакан», —
К Юпитеру закричали

Но пока у них шёл крик,
Подошёл Никифор,
Бла-го-роднейший старик.

Тут у меня ещё не докончено, но всё равно, словами! — трещал капитан, - Никифор берет стакан и, несмотря на крик, выплескивает в лахань всю комедию, и мух и таракана, что давно надо былт сделать. Но заметьте, заметьте, сударыня, таракан не ропщет! Вот ответ на ваш вопрос: "почему?" - вскричал он, торжествуя: - "Та-ра-кан не ропщет!" - Что же касается до Никифора, то он изображает природу, - прибавил он скороговоркой и самодовольно заходил по комнате.

"Lived a cockroach in the world

Such was his condition,

In a glass he chanced to fall

Full of fly-perdition."

"Heavens! What does it mean?" cried Varvara Petrovna. "That's when flies get into a glass in the summer-time," the captain explained hurriedly with the irritable impatience of an author interrupted in reading. "Then it is perdition to the flies, any fool can understand. Don't interrupt, don't interrupt. You'll see, you'll see...." He kept waving his arms.

"But he squeezed against the flies,

They woke up and cursed him,

Raised to Jove their angry cries;

'The glass is full to bursting!'

In the middle of the din

Came along Nikifor,

Fine old man, and looking in...

I haven't quite finished it. But no matter, I'll tell it in words," the captain rattled on. "Nikifor takes the glass, and in spite of their outcry empties away the whole stew, flies, and beetles and all, into the pig pail, which ought to have been done long ago. But observe, madam, observe, the cockroach doesn't complain. That's the answer to your question, why?" he cried triumphantly. "'The cockroach does not complain.' As for Nikifor he typifies nature," he added, speaking rapidly and walking complacently about the room. (“The Possessed,” Part One, Chapter V)

A character in Dostoevski’s novel *Besy* (“The Possessed,” 1873), Lebyadkin mentions in his fable Jupiter (Jove). In his essay *Poeziya Ignata Lebyadkina* (“The Poetry of Ignat Lebyadkin,” 1931) Hodasevich compares Lebyadkin’s fable about the cockroach to Pushkin’s poem *Brozhu li ya vdol’* *ulits shumnykh*… (“Whether I roam along the noisy streets…” 1829):

Лебядкин высказывает святейшее, что в нём есть, и нечто объективно-поэтическое -- но чем более старается он подражать поэтическому канону и общепринятым в поэзии приёмам, тем безвкуснее и нелепее у него это выходит. В послании к Лизе он вовсе теряет власть над стихом и вынужден перейти на прозу. То же и в басне о таракане, которая выходит за пределы любовного цикла и представляет собою изуродованный вариант на пушкинскую тему о равнодушной природе.

Vadim’s last Russian novel *Podarok otchizne* (“The Dare,” 1950) includes a concise biography and critical appraisal of Fyodor Dostoevski. Vadim’s real father, Nikifor Starov seems also to be the father of Vadim’s three wives (Iris Black, Annette Blagovo and Louise Adamson).

There is “star” in Starov. In his essay “The Poetry of Ignat Lebyadkin” Hodasevich quotes the last poem of Lebyadkin’s cycle, *Zvezde-amazonke* (“To the Star Amazon”):

И порхает звезда на коне

В хороводе других амазонок;

Улыбается с лошади мне

Аристократический ребёнок.

And the star flutters on horseback

in the round dance of other amazons;

an aristocratic child

smiles to me from her horse.

Несколько лет тому назад, в Петербурге, я много раз задавал молодым поэтам такой вопрос: "И порхает звезда на коне, в хороводе других амазонок... Чьи это стихи?"

И каждый раз с размаху мне отвечали: -- Блок.

According to Hodasevich, to his question “who is the author of these lines” young poets replied: “Blok.” At the beginning of Blok’s drama *Roza i krest* (“The Rose and the Cross,” 1912) Bertrand mentions *yabloni staryi stvol* (the old trunk of an apple tree). The characters in Blok’s play *Balaganchik* (“The Puppet Show,” 1906) include *Arlekin* (the Harlequin).

In another poem quoted by Hodasevich in his essay Lebyadkin (who imagines that he lost one arm in the Crimean war) calls himself *bezrukiy* (armless):

Любви пылающей граната

Лопнула в груди Игната.

И вновь заплакал горькой мукой

По Севастополю безрукий.

A cannonball of love aflame

Burst in Ignat's tender soul.

And, armless, now in bitter pain

He wept once more for Sevastopol.

At Marina’s funeral Ada meets d’Onsky’s son, a person with only one arm:

‘Oh, I like you better with that nice overweight — there’s more of you. It’s the maternal gene, I suppose, because Demon grew leaner and leaner. He looked positively Quixotic when I saw him at Mother’s funeral. It was all very strange. He wore blue mourning. D’Onsky’s son, a person with only one arm, threw his remaining one around Demon and both wept *comme des fontaines.* (3.8)

The name d’Onsky seems to hint at Onegin’s *donskoy zherebets* (Don stallion) mentioned by Pushkin in Chapter Two (V: 4) of *Eugene Onegin*. Onegin and d’Onsky both have *on* (he) in them.

Alexey Sklyarenko