

Contributors' Notes

Eve Adler (1945–2004) taught Classics at Middlebury College for twenty-five years, including courses in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Her publications include *Vergil's Empire: Political Thought in the Aeneid* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003) and a translation, from German, of Leo Strauss's *Philosophy and Law* (SUNY, 1995). In the 1990s she taught herself Russian and co-wrote, with Vladimir Shlyakhov, *The Dictionary of Russian Slang and Colloquial Expressions* (Barron's, 1995; rev. 2006). Before she was overtaken by grave illness, her engagement with the work of Lucretius had led her to a deep and systematic study of the history of chemistry and physics, along with a variety of other intellectual projects.

Joan Aleshire has been studying and translating Russian poetry for many years. She has published five books of her own poetry, the latest being *Happily* (Four Way Books, 2012). She has taught in the M.F.A. Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College since 1983.

Derrick Austin is an M.F.A. candidate in poetry at the University of Michigan. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Asaracus*, *Unsplendid*, *Tampa Review Online*, *Knockout*, *Crab Orchard Review*, and other journals.

Rick Barot has published two books of poetry with Sarabande Books: *The Darker Fall* (2002) and *Want* (2008), which was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award and winner of the 2009 Grub Street Book Prize. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Artist Trust of Washington, the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, and Stanford University, where he was a Wallace Stegner Fellow and a Jones Lecturer. Barot lives in Tacoma, Washington, and teaches at Pacific Lutheran University. His third book of poems, *Chord*, will be published by Sarabande in 2015.

Rosamund Bartlett is a writer, scholar, and translator who lives in Oxford; her books include *Wagner and Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) and biographies of Chekhov and Tolstoy. As a translator she has published two volumes of stories by Chekhov, and her translation of *Anna Karenina* will be published by Oxford World Classics in 2014. She is a Trustee of the Anton Chekhov Foundation, which was established to preserve the writer's house in Yalta.

Mariya Bashkatova is a junior at Brown University studying Comparative Literature and Cognitive Neuroscience. She writes for the Brown newspaper and is involved in the school's *Aldus Journal of Translation*. She enjoys translating Russian and French literature.

Charles Baxter, who lives in Minneapolis, is the author of twelve books of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. "Sloth" is a chapter of a new book, *There's Something I Want You to Do*, a Decalogue of sorts. He recently edited *The Stories of Sherwood Anderson* for the Library of America.

Leslie Buzzett's work debuted in *New England Review*, where it was nominated for a Pushcart Prize and received Special Mention. Subsequent work has appeared in *West Branch* and *NER Digital*, and is forthcoming in *Carolina Quarterly*. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband and two children, and is currently at work on a novel.

Tommye Blount grew up in Detroit and is a graduate of Michigan State University's advertising program. A Cave Canem fellowship recipient, he has published work in *Collagist*, *Upstreet*, *Another & Another: An Anthology from the Grind Daily Writing Series*, and *Cave Canem Anthology XII*. He is currently working on two manuscripts.

Christopher Brookhouse is the author of numerous works of poetry and fiction.

Robert Chandler is the author of *Brief Lives: Alexander Pushkin* (Hesperus Press, 2009). His translations of Vasily Grossman and co-translations of Andrey Platonov were published by NYRB classics. He has edited anthologies of Russian short stories and Russian magic tales for Penguin Classics. Together with Boris Dralyuk and Irina Mashinski, he has recently completed an *Anthology of Russian Poetry from Pushkin to Brodsky* (Penguin Classics, 2014). His translation of stories by Teffi will be published by Pushkin Press in summer 2014 in a collection entitled *Subtly Worded*.

Elizabeth Chandler is a co-translator, with her husband, Robert Chandler, of Pushkin's *The Captain's Daughter* (Hesperus Press, 2007) and of works by Andrey Platonov and Vasily Grossman. She does not know Russian, but gradually, over the years, has contributed more and more to Robert's translations. She writes: "Usually Robert reads a first draft aloud to me, very slowly, and we discuss it sentence by sentence, batting different possible versions backwards and forwards until we are both satisfied—or until we recognize that a particular apparently insoluble problem is best left to another day."

Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), the well-known Russian playwright and short story writer, began writing while he was a student at the School of Medicine at the University of Moscow, from which he graduated in 1884. While living at his country estate in Melikhovo in the 1890s, he wrote some of his best known works, including "Ward No. 6," "My Life," "Peasants," *The Seagull*, and *Uncle Vanya*. In 1898, he moved to the warmer climate of Yalta to ease his tuberculosis, and there his writing included "The Lady with the Dog," "In the Ravine," "The Bishop," *The Cherry Orchard*, and *Three Sisters*. In 1904 he moved to a health resort in Badenweiler, Germany, where he died.

Alex Cigale's poems have appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Green Mountains Review*, and the *Literary Review*, and online at *Drunken Boat* and *McSweeney's*. His translations from the Russian can be found in *Cimarron Review*, *Literary Imagination*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *PEN America*, and other journals. He is on the editorial boards of numerous magazines, including *Asymptote*, *St. Petersburg Review*, *Third Wednesday*, and *Verse Junkies*. Born in Chernovtsy, Ukraine, in 1963, he lived in St. Petersburg (Leningrad) until age nine and, more recently, served as Assistant Professor at the American University of Central Asia, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–81), one of the towering figures of Russian and world literature, was a novelist, short story writer, and journalist. *Crime and Punishment* (1866) was the first of his five major novels; the other four are *The Idiot* (1868), *Devils* (1872), *The Adolescent* (1875), and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1881).

Boris Dralyuk teaches Russian literature at UCLA and has translated several collections of poetry and prose from Russian and Polish. He received first prize in the 2011 Compass Translation Award competition and, with Irina Mashinski, first prize in the 2012 Joseph Brodsky/Stephen Spender Translation Prize competition. Along with with Robert Chandler and Irina Mashinski, he is a co-editor of the forthcoming *Anthology of Russian Poetry from Pushkin to Brodsky* (Penguin Classics, 2014).

David Edgar's most recent play for the Royal Shakespeare Company, *Written on the Heart*, premiered in Stratford in 2011 and transferred to the West End the following year. Other recent stage work includes *Playing with Fire* (National Theatre, 2005), *Testing the Echo* (Out of Joint, 2008), and *If Only* (Chichester Festival Theatre, 2013). His stage adaptations include the multi-award-winning production of Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* (Royal Shakespeare Company, London and New York, 1980–81). In 1989, he founded Britain's first graduate playwriting course at the University of Birmingham. He is the author of a book on playwriting, *How Plays Work* (Nick Hern Books, 2009), and was president of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain from 2007 to 2013.

Will Evans, a North Carolina native, attended Emory University, where he fell in love with Russian literature. He earned a Master's degree in Russian Culture from Duke University and founded Deep Vellum Publishing in 2013, focusing on publishing world literature in English translation. He currently lives in Dallas, Texas.

Gary Fincke's collection of poems, *The History of Permanence* (Austin University Press, 2011), was awarded the Stephen F. Austin Poetry Prize. His most recent book, a collection of stories, is *The Proper Words for Sin* (West Virginia University Press, 2013). Fincke is the Charles Degenstein Professor of Creative Writing at Susquehanna University.

Castle Freeman Jr., the author of four novels and many stories and essays, is a longtime contributor of short fiction to *NER*, most recently with "Plain Tales from the Hills" (*NER* 33.1). He lives in southeastern Vermont.

Alyssa Dinega Gillespie is Associate Professor of Russian Language and Literature at the University of Notre Dame. Her books include *A Russian Psyche: The Poetic Mind of Marina Tsvetaeva* (2001) and *Taboo Pushkin: Topics, Texts, Interpretations* (2012). A lapsed (or very occasional) poet, she has received several international prizes for her poetic translations from Russian, including first prize in the 2012 Compass Awards and joint third prize in the 2011 Joseph Brodsky/Stephen Spender Translation Prize competition.

Zinaida Nikolaevna Gippius (1869–1945) and her husband, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, were among the founders of Russian Symbolism; together they ran one of the most important

salons of the time. Always flamboyant, Gippius liked to shock—both through her behavior (e.g., insulting her guests and wearing male clothes) and her poems, which she called personal prayers but others saw as blasphemous. In the early 1900s, she and her husband instigated what they called The New Church, an attempt to forge links between the intelligentsia and the Church. Hostile to the October Revolution, in late 1919 they left for Paris, founding the literary and philosophical society The Green Lamp.

Ellen Hinsey's forthcoming books include *Mastering the Past: Reports from Central and Eastern Europe* and *Magnetic North: Conversations with Tomas Venclova*. She is also the author of three books of poetry, including *Update on the Descent*, which was awarded the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize. She edited and translated *The Junction: Selected Poems of Tomas Venclova* (Bloodaxe, 2009), and her translations of contemporary French fiction and memoir have been published by Riverhead/Penguin. Her work has appeared frequently in *NER*, most recently with the essay "Putin Cracks Down: The Russian Presidential Election and Its Aftermath" (34.2). A former Berlin Prize Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin, she has been the recipient of a Lannan Foundation Award and a Rona Jaffe Foundation Award. She lives and teaches in Paris.

Barbara Hyams, Ph.D., is writing a philosophical novel about American consumerism. She lives in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Jenny Johnson's poems have appeared in *Best American Poetry 2012*, *Southern Review*, *Collagist*, *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, and elsewhere. The winner of *Beloit Poetry Journal's* Chad Walsh Poetry Prize in 2011 for her poem "Aria," she has been awarded scholarships to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, as well as a residency to the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts. Currently she is a Lecturer at the University of Pittsburgh, where she teaches writing.

Oleg Kashin was born in 1980 in Kaliningrad, Russia, and was a navigator in the Russian Navy before becoming a journalist. His work appears regularly in Russian-language publications including Russian *Forbes*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, and *Kommersant*. Kashin gained international notoriety after being beaten by unknown assailants in November 2010 outside his apartment in Moscow. He spent several months in the hospital recovering from the assault, which is suspected to have been politically motivated, and wrote about this experience in the *New York Times* ("A Beating on My Beat," December 11, 2010). He was awarded the Paul Klebnikov Fund Journalism Fellowship in 2012, which supported a period of professional development in New York City. *Fardvor, Ruissa!* is his first published work of fiction, and it initially appeared in translation in Germany and Croatia. Kashin maintains one of Russia's most-followed Twitter accounts (@KSHN).

Michael R. Katz is C. V. Starr Professor Emeritus of Russian and East European Studies at Middlebury College. He has written two studies of Russian literature and has translated a dozen or so Russian novels into English. Recently named a Mellon Emeritus Fellow, he is currently working on a compilation that includes a new translation of Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* and the recently discovered "counterstories" written in response by his wife and son.

Helen Keller (1880–1968) was a widely known American author, lecturer, and political activist. Rendered completely deaf and blind by an early childhood illness, she attended the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston; there she met Anne Sullivan, who taught her to read and write. In 1904 Keller graduated with honors from Radcliffe College, the first deafblind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. Among her numerous publications are *The Story of My Life* (1903), *The World I Live In* (1908), and *My Religion* (1927), a spiritual autobiography that advocated the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg and was later revised and republished as *Light in My Darkness*.

John Kinsella's most recent books include the poetry collection *Jam Tree Gully* (W. W. Norton, 2012) and the collaborative work *Redstart*, with Forrest Gander (Iowa University Press, 2012). He is a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge University, and a Professorial Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia.

Karl Kirchwey is the author of six books of poems, most recently *Mount Lebanon* (Marian Wood/Putnam, 2011), as well as a translation of Paul Verlaine's first book titled *Poems Under Saturn* (Princeton University Press, 2011). His new manuscript is *Stumbling Blocks: Roman Poems*. Kirchwey is Professor of the Arts and Director of Creative Writing at Bryn Mawr College, and from 2010–13 served as Andrew Heiskell Arts Director at the American Academy in Rome.

Osip Mandelstam (1891–1938) was born in Poland and studied in France and Germany. Along with his contemporaries Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Boris Pasternak, he published work in the period of artistic freedom before the Russian Revolution of 1917; in time, all these authors would suffer from political suppression under Lenin and Stalin. Mandelstam's poems are now judged to be among the most memorable and suggestive of the century, but from the time of his death in a labor camp in 1938 until the publication of his collected poems in 1960 in Berlin, he was unknown to non-Russian readers.

Cate Marvin's third poem of poems, *Oracle*, is forthcoming from W. W. Norton in 2014. She teaches at the College of Staten Island, City University of New York.

Philip Metres is the author of *A Concordance of Leaves* (Diode, 2013), *abu ghraib arias* (Flying Guillotine, 2011), *To See the Earth* (Cleveland State, 2008), *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront Since 1941* (University of Iowa, 2007), and other books. His work has appeared in *Best American Poetry* and has garnered numerous awards, including two NEA fellowships, four Ohio Arts Council Grants, the Arab American Book Award, and a 2014 Creative Workforce Fellowship. He teaches literature and creative writing at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Merritt Moseley teaches Literature at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. He is the author of several books on recent British fiction and has contributed essays to many journals including the *Literary Review* and the *Sewanee Review*.

Pasha Mrachek was born at the height of Soviet stagnation in the frozen tundra of Severomorsk, above the Arctic Circle, but has lived in St. Petersburg since he was an infant, writing for cultural magazines and blogs, and singing in a number of punk rock bands.

Sarah Murphy lives in northeast Florida, where she teaches literature and creative writing at Jacksonville University.

Vladimir Narbut (1888–1944[?]) was a Russian poet of Ukrainian descent whose first collection, *Allilua (Hallelujah)*, 1912, satirized the landed gentry, and was seized by the police. After the February Revolution of 1917, Narbut joined the Bolsheviks, and held a series of political and cultural posts while he continued to write and edit publications advocating the preservation of cultural tradition. During the Russian Civil War, Narbut was imprisoned by the White Guards. In 1928 he was accused of misrepresenting his imprisonment and expelled from the Communist Party. His collection, *Spiral*, was due to be published in 1936 when he was accused of belonging to the subversive “Ukrainian nationalist” group and sentenced to five years in the Gulag. He was subsequently incarcerated in prison camps, and the circumstances and date of his death are uncertain.

Aimee Nezhukumatathil is professor of English at the State University of New York at Fredonia. Her most recent collection of poetry, *Lucky Fish* (Tupelo Press, 2011), was awarded the gold medal in Poetry from the Independent Publisher Book Awards and the Eric Hoffer Grand Prize for Independent Books. She is the recipient of numerous other awards, including an NEA Fellowship in Poetry, the Pushcart Prize, the Boatwright Prize from *Shenandoah*, the Richard Hugo Prize from *Poetry Northwest*, and the Angoff Award from the *Literary Review*. Her poems and essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *Poetry*, *Orion*, *Southern Review*, *Tin House*, and many other journals .

Matthew Nienow holds an M.F.A. from the University of Washington and a degree in Traditional Small Craft from the Northwest School of Wooden Boatbuilding. His work has appeared in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Crazyhorse*, *Poetry*, *Best New Poets* (2007 and 2012), and in previous issues of *NER*. A 2013 Ruth Lilly Poetry Fellow, Nienow has also received awards and fellowships from the NEA, the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, the Elizabeth George Foundation, the Artist Trust of Washington, and many other organizations. He lives with his wife and two sons in Port Townsend, Washington.

Sofia Yakovlevna Parnok (1885–1933) studied music at the Conservatory of Geneva and law in St. Petersburg before devoting herself to poetry. In 1909, after divorcing her husband, she settled in Moscow and converted to Orthodox Christianity. In 1914 she met Marina Tsvetaeva, and the two women fell passionately in love. Parnok wrote of it in her first book, *Poems* (1916). No Russian poet before Parnok had written so directly about female, let alone lesbian, sexuality, and as a lesbian and an Orthodox Christian, she was doubly isolated in Soviet society. In a poem written in 1927 she speaks of herself as an invisible woman. She titled her last published collection *In an Undertone* (1928) and her last unpublished cycle “A Useless Good.”

John Poch's most recent book is *Dolls* (Orchises Press, 2009). He is professor of English at Texas Tech University. In Spring 2014 he will be a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Barcelona, lecturing on the subject of American poetry.

Anzhelina Polonskaya was born in a small town near Moscow, where she is currently preparing a new volume of poetry for publication. She is a member of the Moscow Union of Writers and the Russian PEN center. Her book, *A Voice*, appeared in Northwestern University Press's "Writings from an Unbound Europe," and was shortlisted for the 2005 Corneliu M. Popescu Prize for European Poetry in Translation. Polonskaya's work has appeared in many journals, including *American Poetry Review*, *International Poetry Review*, *Massachusetts Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*. She is also the recipient of a Rockefeller Fellowship.

Steven Poole is the author of the books *You Aren't What You Eat* (2012), *Unspeak* (2006), and *Trigger Happy* (2000). He is a journalist, cultural critic, broadcaster, and composer for documentaries and short films, including the award-winning *EVOL*. His work appears in the *Guardian*, *Edge*, the *New Statesman*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Anna Semyonovna Prismanova (1892–1960), one of the most original Russian poets of her generation, was born in Latvia into the family of a Jewish doctor. The family moved to Moscow in 1918. By 1924 she had moved to Paris, where she married the poet Aleksandr Ginger, with whom she had two sons. Writing for her was a full-time but private activity; she played little part in the cultural life of the Russian émigré world. The first of her four collections appeared in 1937.

Dimitri Psurtsev is a Russian poet and translator of British and American prose writers and poets (including Dylan Thomas, James Aldridge, A. S. Byatt, John Steinbeck, and Dana Gioia). His two books of poetry, *Ex Roma Tertia* and *Tengiz Notebook*, were published in Russia in 2001. He teaches translation at Moscow State Linguistic University and lives with his wife Natalia and daughter Anna outside Moscow.

Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin (1799–1837), often considered the founding author of the Russian literary tradition, came of age during the country's Romantic period. His *Ruslan and Liudmila*, published in 1820, is seen as marking the official start of Romanticism on Russian soil. By the end of the 1820s, literary tastes had begun to shift away from poetry, and Pushkin experimented with a variety of other genres and forms. His late narrative poem *The Bronze Horseman* forms the cornerstone of the myth of St. Petersburg in Russian literary culture. Exiled in his youth for political reasons, Pushkin was never free of government surveillance or censorship. After having fought more than twenty illegal duels during the course of his lifetime, he ultimately succumbed to wounds sustained in a duel with a French military officer to salvage his wife's honor.

Young Rader lives and writes in St. Louis, Missouri.

Paisley Rekdal is the author of two books of nonfiction and four books of poetry,

the most recent of which is *Animal Eye* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013). She teaches at the University of Utah and runs the website Mapping Salt Lake City (www.mappingslc.org).

Martha Rhodes is the author of four poetry collections: *The Beds* (Autumn House, 2012), *Mother Quiet* (University of Nebraska Press, 2004), *Perfect Disappearance* (New Issues, 2000), and *At the Gate* (Provincetown Arts, 1995). She teaches in the M.F.A. Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College and at Sarah Lawrence College. A resident of New York City, she is director of the Frost Place Conference on Poetry in New Hampshire and director of Four Way Books.

Lev Rubinstein is one of the founders of Moscow conceptualism. A former librarian at the Lenin Library in Moscow, he began composing poetic series on library index cards in the 1970s, influenced by avant-garde traditions, Zen, and postmodernism. *The Compleat Catalogue of Comedic Novelties* is forthcoming from Ugly Duckling Presse in 2014, in a translation by Philip Metres and Tatiana Tulchinsky. Since the late 1990s, Rubinstein has been writing weekly essays for various Russian publications, and recently has been involved in the democratic movements against Vladimir Putin.

Stephanie Sandler, who is Ernest E. Monrad Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University, is an American scholar of Russian poetry and a translator of contemporary Russian poetry. Author of *Commemorating Pushkin: Russia's Myth of a National Poet* (Stanford University Press, 2004) and editor of collections on sexuality and the body in Russian culture, and on ideas of the self in Russian history, she has also written widely on contemporary Russian poetry. Her translations include Elena Fanailova's *The Russian Version*, with Genya Turovskaya (Ugly Duckling Presse, 2010). The poems by Olga Sedakova that appear in this issue will be published by Open Letter in *In Praise of Poetry*, translated by Stephanie Sandler with Carolyn Clark and Ksenia Golubovich, in spring 2014.

Peter Savodnik's writing has appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, *Time*, the *Washington Post*, the *New Republic*, and many other publications. Formerly based in Moscow he has traveled and reported extensively on the former Soviet Union. He currently lives in Washington, DC.

Marian Schwartz has translated over sixty volumes of Russian classic and contemporary fiction, history, biography, criticism, and fine art. Her most recent translations are Andrei Gelasimov's *Gods of the Steppe* (Amazon Crossing, 2013), Mikhail Shishkin's *Maidenhair* (Open Letter, 2012), Leonid Yuzefovich's *Harlequin's Costume* (Glagoslav, 2013), and Aleksandra Shatsikh's *Black Square* (Yale University Press, 2012). Her new translation of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* will be published by Yale University Press in fall 2014.

Olga Sedakova emerged from unofficial poetry circles in the post-Soviet period and has now published more than a dozen books of poetry and prose. A teacher of Dante, Pushkin, and contemporary Russian poetry, she has also created a dictionary of Old Church

Slavonic words and has written essays on philosophy, literary criticism, and theology, as well as cultural commentary. Her work has been translated into many languages, including French, Hebrew, Danish, Greek, Serbian, and German, and she has translated into Russian the work of Dickinson, Mallarmé, Rilke, St. Francis, Petrarch, Dante, and others. A recipient of the Andrei Bely Prize, the Vladimir Solovyov Prize in the Vatican, the Solzhenitsyn Prize, and the Officier d' Ordre des Arts et des Lettres de la République Française, she lives in Moscow. The poems in this issue of *NER* will appear in *In Praise of Poetry*, to be published by Open Letter in spring 2014, translated by Stephanie Sandler with Carolyn Clark and Ksenia Golubovich.

Mikhail Shishkin, born in Moscow in 1961, has lived in Switzerland since 1995. His first publication, the short story “Calligraphy Lesson,” was named 1993 Best Debut of the Year by the literary journal *Znamya*. Shishkin is the first writer to win Russia’s three major literary awards—the Russian Booker Prize, the National Bestseller Prize, and the Big Book Prize—and his work has been translated into twenty-nine languages. Two of Shishkin’s novels have been published in English: *Maidenhair* (Open Letter, 2012) and *The Light and the Dark* (Quercus, 2014). This is the first appearance of “Nabokov’s Inkblot” in any language; it will be included in Shishkin’s first collection of short stories to be published in English, *Calligraphy Lesson: The Collected Works of Mikhail Shishkin* (Deep Vellum Publishing, 2014).

Vladimir Shlyakhov is a Doctor of Pedagogy and Professor who teaches Russian for foreigners at the Pushkin State Institute of Russian Language in Moscow. He has also worked at universities in India, Great Britain, and Denmark, and taught a course on Russian nihilism for several years at Middlebury College. In addition to more than a hundred publications on linguistics, he is the author of two dictionaries: *Dictionary of Russian Slang and Colloquial Expressions*, with Eve Adler (Barron’s, 1995; rev. 2006), and *Words and Word Combinations of Russian and American Military Conversational Interaction*, published in 2011 in Russia.

Olga Slavnikova was born in the Urals and began publishing fiction in the late 1980s. Since 2001, she has lived and worked in Moscow, where she is General Director of the Debut Independent Literary Prize for authors under twenty-five writing in Russian. Slavnikova has published five novels, two of which, *2017* and *Light-Head*, have been translated into English. Her fiction has also been translated into French, Italian, Swedish, Chinese, Polish, and other languages. Slavnikova has been the recipient of the prestigious Apollon Grigoriev Prize, the Polonsky Prize, the Bazhov Prize, and the Russian Booker Prize. She has been a finalist for the Booker Prize, the Anti-Booker Prize, the National Bestseller Prize, and the Belkin Prize for best Russian novella. “The Cherepanova Sisters” is one of twelve stories collected in *Love in Train Car No. 7*.

P Adams Sitney is the Professor of Visual Arts at Princeton University. He is the author of *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde* (Oxford University Press), *Modernist Montage: The Obscurity of Vision in Cinema and Literature* (Columbia University Press),

Eyes Upside Down: Visionary Filmmakers and the Heritage of Emerson (Oxford University Press), and *Vital Crises in Italian Cinema: Iconography, Stylistics, Politics*, which was republished by Oxford in 2013 with a new epilogue. The essay published in this issue of *NER* is from his forthcoming book, *The Cinema of Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Jeff Staiger has a Ph.D. in English from the University of California at Berkeley. His critical writings, on such topics as Harold Brodkey, Thomas Pynchon, and Homer, have appeared in recent years in various literary reviews. He is currently writing a novel as well as a book on the state of contemporary American fiction. He works as the Librarian for Classics, English, and Romance Languages at the University of Oregon.

Arseny Tarkovsky (1907–89) was a prominent Soviet poet and translator of poetry from many languages, including Georgian, Armenian, and Arabic. He survived the entire Soviet era by translating poetry, though he volunteered as a war correspondent during the Second World War and suffered a leg amputation. His renown grew with the publication of his first book in the 1950s and when his son (the filmmaker Andrey Tarkovsky) used readings of his father’s poems in his films *The Mirror* and *Stalker*.

Teffi (1872–1952) is the penname of Nadezhda Alexandrovna Lokhvitskaya, who was born into a St. Petersburg family that treasured literature; she and her three sisters all became writers. Teffi wrote in many styles and genres, but her best-known works are her short stories and *Memoirs* (1928–29) concerning her last journey across Russia before she left by boat for Istanbul from the Crimea in 1919. After settling in Paris in 1922, she played an active role in the literary life of that city’s émigré community. Her work was widely read, and admired by both Lenin and the Tsar. “Lifeless Beast” is drawn from the forthcoming collection of Teffi’s stories, *Subtly Worded*, to be published by Pushkin Press in 2014.

Craig Morgan Teicher is the author of three books, most recently *To Keep Love Blurry* (BOA, 2012) and the chapbook *Ambivalence and Other Conundrums* (Omnidawn, 2013). He works at *Publishers Weekly*, and his prose about poetry appears widely. He is a poetry editor for the *Literary Review* and lives in Brooklyn with his wife and children.

Sean Thomas graduated from the Delaware College of Art and Design in Wilmington in 2001 and earned his B.F.A. in 2004 from the Rhode Island School of Design. During his final year at RISD, he was selected for the European Honors Program and spent nine months immersed in Italian culture. Awarded the 2009 Rhode Island State Council of the Arts Fellowship for Painting, he has shown work regularly in galleries throughout the northeast and beyond. After several years in Providence, Rhode Island, he recently relocated to Phoenix with his wife Lisa, daughter Sophia, and son Ethan. He continues to paint every day in his desert Southwest studio, and does not miss the snow that much.

Andrew Touhy, a recipient of the San Francisco Browning Society’s Dramatic Monologue Award and *Fourteen Hills’* Bambi Holmes Fiction Prize, is also a nominee for inclusion in *Best New American Voices*. His stories appear in *Conjunctions*, *New American Writing*,

New Orleans Review, the *Collagist*, and other literary journals. He teaches at the Writing Salon in San Francisco and Berkeley, and lives in Oakland with his wife and child.

Marina Tsvetaeva (1892–1941) was born in Moscow, although her family’s years abroad allowed her to learn Italian, French, and German. Among her translations are Russian versions of Goethe and Rilke, and French versions of Pushkin. Her affairs with the poet Sofia Parnok and with Konstantin Rodzevich inspired her two great cycles of love poems, “Poem of the Mountain” and “Poem of the End.” In addition to poetry, she wrote diaries, literary criticism, and verse dramas. Judged to be one of the most important writers of the era, she produced several celebrated collections, including *Craft* (1923) and *After Russia* (1928), as well as “The Ratcatcher” (1925), a satirical version of the Pied Piper legend in which Bolshevik rats gradually take on features of the German burghers they have ousted. After being evacuated from wartime Moscow, Tsvetaeva hanged herself. No one attended her funeral.

Tatiana Tulchinsky has translated many works of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction, including Leo Tolstoy’s *Plays*. She received a Best Translation of the Year Award from the American Association of Slavists, a Witter Bynner Foundation for Poetry grant, and a Creative Writing Translation Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Currently she is working on a project translating and promoting English language drama for Russian theater.

Tomas Venclova was born in Klaipeda, Lithuania, in 1937 and attended Vilnius University. While living in Moscow and St. Petersburg, he joined the circle of Russian dissident writers and intellectuals. One of five founding members of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, he took part in the Lithuanian human rights movement. Forced to emigrate in 1977, Venclova was deprived of his Soviet citizenship. Since 1980 he has taught Slavic studies at Yale University, where he is now Professor Emeritus. His poetry, literary criticism, translations, political commentary, and literary biography have been translated into over twenty languages, garnering prestigious literary and human rights awards such as the Vilenica International Literary Prize, the Person of Tolerance of the Year Award from the Sugihara Foundation, and the Prize of Two Nations, which he received jointly with Czesław Miłosz. In 2013 Venclova was made an honorary citizen of Vilnius.

Frida Vigdorova (1915–65) was a novelist, journalist, and pedagogue, well-known in Russia and Eastern Europe for her writings but also for being a defender of those in need. She began teaching at seventeen and graduated from the Moscow Pedagogical Institute in 1937, when she began keeping “notebooks of a parent,” which would provide information for her writings throughout her life. In 1941 she was evacuated to Tashkent, where she worked as a correspondent for *Pravda* and became acquainted with Anna Akhmatova. She wrote often of those unjustly accused or rendered helpless by bureaucracy, publishing in *Young Communist Truth*, *Literary Gazette*, and other periodicals, and she worked on behalf of the disenfranchised as People’s Deputy of her district. In 1948 she was fired from *Young Communist Truth* because she was a Jew, and

she began writing fiction, including the novel *My Class*. She is best known in the West for her transcript of the trial of the poet Joseph Brodsky in 1964. After the failure of efforts to free him, she fell into a deep depression, and unaware that she was suffering from cancer told her friends that her illness was called “Brodsky.” She died one month before his release.

Andrew Wachtel is the president of the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Previously he was dean of the Graduate School and director of the Roberta Buffett Center for International and Comparative Studies at Northwestern University; he is also a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Wachtel’s interests range from Russian literature and culture to East European and Balkan culture, history, and politics to contemporary Central Asia. His most recent books are *The Balkans in World History* (Oxford University Press, 2008) and *Russian Literature* (with Ilya Vinitsky, Polity Press, 2008). He has translated poetry and prose from Russian, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Bulgarian, and Slovenian, and is currently working on a cultural nationalism project in Central Asia, particularly Kyrgyzstan.

G. C. Waldrep’s most recent books are *Your Father on the Train of Ghosts* (BOA Editions, 2011), with John Gallaher; *The Arcadia Project: North American Postmodern Pastoral* (Ahsahta, 2012), co-edited with Joshua Corey; and a chapbook, *Susquehanna* (Omnidawn, 2013). He lives in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, where he teaches at Bucknell University, edits the journal *West Branch*, and serves as Editor-at-Large for *Kenyon Review*.

Nick Wolven lives in New York City. His fiction has appeared in a range of publications, including the experimental zine *Lady Churchill’s Rosebud Wristlet*, science fiction magazines, and the literary journal *BooLaboo*.

Nikolay Alexeyevich Zabolotsky (1903–58), the son of an agronomist and a schoolteacher, spent his childhood in the remote province of Vyatka. He studied in Moscow and Petrograd, and in 1928 was the primary writer of the manifesto for the modernist literary group OBERIU, or “Association of Real Art.” Many of the poems in his first collection, *Columns* (1929), are vignettes of some of the grotesque aspects of city life. In 1933, his poem “The Triumph of Agriculture”—about a utopian world in which the joys of Communism are shared with cows and horses—was seen as satirical, though it may have been intended as a sincere vision of a better future. A large collection of poems, already in proof, was subsequently canceled, and he turned to translations and children’s writing in order to make a living. Zabolotsky’s concern with the place of human beings in the natural world remained constant. In 1937, he published seventeen poems on nature and philosophy, for which he was charged with producing anti-Soviet propaganda and sent to Siberia. During the sixty-day journey in a crowded cattle truck, Zabolotsky composed “Forest Lake,” a poem he especially valued. In 1946 he returned to Moscow, where he was reinstated into the Soviet Writers’ Union; he continued writing and translating until his death.