



Leonid Sboyko

# MIND OVER MATTER

72 assorted poems in English  
by a Russian

Leonid Sboyko

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poems in English by a Russian**

«Издательские решения»

**Sboyko L.**

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If you prefer a brief or very brief reading to skim through all those topics that relate to every reflecting person, do tap into this remarkably concise and versatile poetry. The book offers six dozens of easy verses that focus on human relationships, time, urban solitude and love or lack thereof. Russia as the author's native country is another lyrical subject matter touched upon. To top it off, enjoy witty puns, limericks and other fun rhymes at the end of this nice travel-companion volume.

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## On Time and Timeproof Matters

Of all time measure units  
Day is one true:  
The rest are merely conventions  
To human counting due.  
The morning, noon, then evening, night,  
Then dawn again – that's always right:  
There's never other cycle —  
A change unchangeable like a ...  
Like what, indeed? Like what?

*2003*

Future's horizon  
We never reach  
Stuck in the Present  
And our memories  
Future's the cradle  
Of our dreams  
We're freer there  
Than we can be  
By Past, in the Present, for Future we live:  
What due to, what in and what for;  
Past is the one which  
We so quickly enrich,  
Present's a fiction,  
Future, we miss and put off

*1997*

Believe the Time Inside about its speed  
For it's the other one that cheats:  
The one we check by glancing at a clock,  
The one whose pace we take in as a shock.

*2004*

The river flows,  
The sunset glows,  
The wind, forsaken, freely blows,  
My timer quicker and quicker slows  
And soon comes to a stand;  
The heat still beats,  
My pulse still reads,  
I peacefully wonder where it leads

*2002*

A rainy, rainy, rainy day  
A good old chess game left to play...  
I wish the day would stay  
And I would play  
Lifetimes away...

*2002*

Time wears not  
But it makes one wear  
Some find it cruel  
Some find it fair

*2002*

## Citified and City-free

Civilization of sleepwalkers,  
Civilization of small talkers —  
That's who we are,  
That's today's broad karma!  
That's where we would end up webbed  
But few first years having kept  
At curb, in sweet deceit,  
In which I would have rather leapt  
Once and for all, again,  
To never wake up to the realm  
Of those who sleep when walking,  
Of those nothingtalking.

*2003*

Everybody knows what it's all about,  
Nobody knows what for:  
Hi-smi-ling and signing  
And politely dining  
Then feeling incredibly bored...  
Nobody relates  
To my diving today  
In a cold mountain lake.

*2000*

Too many people close about  
Make a crowd.  
Moscow's endowed with it, no doubt:  
We abound,  
We are all around  
Whom have we found?  
No one to be the One,  
No sooth to be the Truth,  
No win worth having won,  
No fighting nail and tooth.

Too many people, not too many friends —  
A common big places' notable trend,  
To lonely homes the way to wend,  
Away from small places, from which we were rent.

Too many things that are currently on —  
The shows – why not – might indeed go on  
So all our talks are of shows we've seen



And just city places, to which we have been.  
You write to your province friends of this waterspout  
But there's nothing you feel worth writing about —  
To them, that all is city talk,  
Which we ill-strenuously balk.

Too many people close about  
No place to stay out  
You are alone  
But not quite your own  
You are quite single  
But you have to mingle...  
Time gets by —  
Hard to ask it why —  
And you are just a slice  
Of one big apple-pie.

Too many people for so few places  
Homes to mad and futile races  
For better and better stuff and gadgets to have  
But everyone needs somebody to love.

Too many people close about  
Make a crowd  
But no-one's as close to thee  
As you would want him to be.  
We abound,  
We are all around —  
Whom have we found?

*2005*

Lots of people, little space:  
One hot dirty endless race,  
One for pleasure, leisure, place,  
One immeasurable craze.

Lots of people, little space:  
All big cities are a race...  
One must really be small  
To fit in it with us all

*2007*

ComPunication

We are some of the first of those  
Who have had their first nice dose  
Of computerized communication:

A dose of comPunication.

Why meet

If you can have your seat

In your place

While I can in mine

And still communicate?

There's the web, the phone, the personal page,

The social network, there's all the rage

So let's comPuniCage!

It's neat

For you can have your seat

In your nameless city

And I can in mine

Grab the keyboard, hit it!

Sorry, my e-friend, I didn't know

That you by this time have grown so old

I haven't logged out for twenty-five years

I've always been near, e-near.

But then again...

Why meet

If you can get old in your place

And I can in mine

And still get old, get old, get old

Non-e-old...

Undo! Undo! Undo the changes!

2008

If in a place of many

You don't have a penny

The many around you won't probably help:

Life ain't so sunny

Where everyone's running

For nothing but money.

It cannot be helped.

2007

Deep, very deep in the taiga forest

Where the beautiful fir-tree grows

A squat plain log-built loner's cottage

Stands in the thick of the grove.

The ski-path meandering endlessly through

The realm of the evergreen muffled with snow

Brings me to the hut not really soon —

I've come here to spend time alone.

Cold and tired but happy and hopeful

I stoke up the oven and unpack the victuals.

The sky is starry, the flame is joyful,

Life seems so suddenly simple.

*2001*

Don't talk to me  
The way the talk should be,  
Talk to me free,  
Don't sing to me,  
For all I want from thee  
Is just sincerity.  
So don't talk to me  
Like they talk on TV,  
Don't quarrel with me  
Like they do in the movies,  
But do it sincerely,  
Do it upfront,  
Do it so thoroughly  
I am right away stunned;  
Don't do it right,  
But do it your way,  
Do it at night  
And during the day.  
Don't talk to me  
The way the talk should be,  
Talk to me free.

*2002*

Hometown-bound

A long steel rail  
That we all have seen  
With its maddening steadiness  
And its lamp-side sheen  
Carries on carrying us  
To the places we've been  
Helping to go back  
To the pasts long gone...  
Some nice, some lived irreversibly wrong.  
People who live there  
Live on in our past  
Which seems to be bound  
To always last.

*2012*

The subject can be narrow or broad:  
It ranges from 'lapel' to 'Lord',  
It may be quite a panorama

But here's today's communication drama:  
It's never deep however broad:  
We listen but we soon get bored.  
Recurring to computers, TV, books,  
Indulging in embellishing our looks,  
We shallower soon become,  
To coreless, flashy life succumbed.

*2004*

## Russia-Bound

When Russia was said to have been sold  
I wasn't sold on that:  
The heart of this country is inert to gold,  
The song is infinitely sad.

*1999*

One hundred yards they sleep underneath  
The stormy chest of the Barents Sea  
In an iron, iron black submarine  
Day after day into eternity...  
Penned captain-lieutenant, 'We're twenty-three'...  
...'we'll be twenty-three and here we'll be'...

*2000*

I will see a whole world  
But everywhere I go  
I will see the sky above  
Now high and now low  
I will breathe the air  
Everywhere I go  
I will be myself  
Whatever I may know.

*1995*

That's Russia

You will never translate it into your own language  
So let me talk to you in your own tongue.

I've been living here for many a year  
Couldn't help looking here at many a thing  
Seen many a foreigner in and to this country  
Foreigners by passport and foreigners convinced  
Strangers changing attitudes by seconds  
Strangers largely to themselves  
Many a madman have I seen too  
Many who died to know what to do  
Many a bright head locked in a madhouse  
Many a sage man, many obtuse  
Many a small man saying Russia is great  
Many in love with it, many in hate  
Many who added they can't understand it

Many explaining: 'Russia's just vast'  
Some say that Russia has always been still  
Others remark it has always been ill;  
Many believe it's a land of confusion  
Many assert it is all an illusion  
Historians say that Russia is old  
Weather men say that Russia is cold  
East and West say that Russians are hot

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