



**FOR UKRAINE:  
Writers together**

**Tucson And Friends**

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**TO ALL WRITERS, POETS,  
PROFESSIONALS &  
AMATEURS:**

**ДЯКУЮ - THANK YOU**

All proceeds from the sale of this book are donated to Ukrainians in need of help because of the criminal and destructive war Ukraine has been enduring. As the initiator of this effort, I am in touch with the St. Mary's Protectress Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Ukraine in Phoenix, AZ, in the USA to direct the donations.

I thank Mr. Borisevich, President of the Ukrainian-American Society of Tucson, Arizona, who provided me information about the church.

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# UKRAINIA

**U**kraine doesn't lose

**K**aput are the attackers,

**R**elentless Ukrainians

**A**rmed with strength,

**I**n front of horrors

**N**ever cease fighting,

**I**n unity,

**A**nd forever

I wish the sun is for us together  
Together against stupid people  
I wish, we can play together in the sun, on  
a beach

My child is your child and I know, you will  
take care of her

Your child is in my arms, quiet. I take care  
of her.

You are my sister, my brother.

Together for a better world.

I think about you with love.

# Lent

*for the people of Ukraine*

In the light of all we've  
endured  
during the pandemic, I choose  
some easy things to give up  
this year,  
a second glass of wine,  
pancakes on the weekend,  
and think myself righteous  
to endure such sacrifice.

How dare I,  
while you give up safety,  
while you pray for your  
country, your countrymen, an end to the  
bombs,  
a simple return to peace.

You wish you had enough  
of something to give up.  
How dare I feel virtue  
in avoiding flagrant pleasure  
while you, this Lent,  
forgo food, shelter, home, life.

## Never Again

words heard repeatedly for past 70 years.  
The barbarians still come to explode scenes of death  
24/7 onto our daily television news feeds.

Bombed from the sky Ukrainian blood now flows  
next to the largest mass murderous site,  
the Holocaust Memorial Babi Yar.

Dead bodies lie unclaimed tossed into trenches  
close to the holy ground where my ancestors lie  
unidentified without gravestones.  
New bodies tossed into mass grave ditches  
now join them.  
to lie besides them.

My ear still hears the jeer of Pogrom voices  
*Kill the Yids, save Mother Russia*  
Now it's Putin's savagery call  
*Kill the Ukrainians save Mother Russia*

In vain we plead with the war-makers  
*Let your people go*  
*to choose a government*  
*by their People for their People.*

## *WE WILL HAVE THEM*

We will have them  
Our beautiful days  
And love,  
When they have peace,  
When we are together,  
Humans, hand in hand

## She Who Yearns

Sitting cross-legged,  
morning silence rises meets  
the top of my head  
spirals upward to a light so brilliant  
it links with you, Kuan Yin,  
Goddess of Compassion  
whose mercy I experience  
as boundless.

Alleviating world suffering  
which I pray for...and my suffering  
which I pray for.  
Ending hunger, which I pray for  
as when I take my luncheon plate  
loaded with teriyaki salmon,  
fresh tomato slices and fragrant saffron rice.

Yes,  
I ask again that others might eat  
who did not eat yesterday  
and will not eat tomorrow.  
I pray and wait.  
Israel waits, the Palestinians, Afghans wait,  
the Ukrainians, the United States of America waits  
from the Pacific Coast, raging aflame to  
the hurricane wounded Eastern Coast,  
the whole world waits.

Do you hear my prayers, Kuan Yin?  
Should I speak louder? Softer?  
Am I not fit to ask?  
Or is it that I have some belief system,  
some preconceived concept that limits me,

unable as I am to hold focused mind  
for more than it takes to plead  
*Please, Kuan Yin, answer my prayers  
make me worthy of thy grace.*

Sandra H. Luber

## WHAT LED TO WAR?

What led to this war? It is very complicated for Western people (and for many Ukrainians too) to understand the insurmountable existential chasm between so-called Russians and Ukrainians.

I am a Ukrainian, aged 50+, who lived in Russia for more than 10 years in 1986-98, worked there in various cities and regions, from capitals to distant Siberia. For many years I was connected with Russia in business and life. My address book has several hundred Russian contacts, including relatives. My Russian language is perfect, I have life experience and therefore I understand what and how it happens.

The first thing that is not understood in the West is that there is no such ethnicity as "Russian". This is an artificial, invented concept for a mixture of different peoples, which has been forcefully formed over the last few centuries. Including the Russian language, which is an artificial mix of Old Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Turkic, Finno-Ugric and several Germanic languages vocabulary. That is, unlike Ukrainians, Russians are not an ethnic entity, but an imperial one. In their imperial mentality, there is unconditional slavish obedience to the leader (no matter what his name is - tsar, secretary-general, or president). For many centuries, by all means of psychological influence, they have been instilled and continue to be instilled with a sense of the superiority of the so-called "Russian" (i.e., imperial) over anything else. Therefore, everything else is an object of envy and ridicule for them. I was present in Russia during the collapse of the soviet empire and watched what was happening to people's psychology. For several years, confusion reigned among them, they lived in humiliation, poverty and despair. The smartest began to gradually adopt certain Western values, learn business, foreign languages. But this period was very short and did not affect the upbringing of children, school education, and higher education either. The first to recover from the shock was a huge covert social network set up by the KGB (several million influential people, including educators, cultural figures, religious figures, the army, and the police). They once again confidently returned to education and the media the propaganda of the supremacy of imperial Russian. This propaganda has been particularly widespread since 2008, when Russia seized part of Georgia

and the world endured it. Then this propaganda psychosis unfolded even stronger. For example, sometime in 2014, I turned on a Russian TV news program. My two daughters, then teenagers, after watching this news for only a few minutes, started crying and asked me, "Dad, why do they hate us so much?".

Now, in 2022, when Russia is carrying this terrible war against Ukraine, firing rockets and bombs at peaceful Russian-speaking cities - out of hundreds of my relatives, acquaintances and "friends" from Russia, only one (!!! a Jew from Moscow) expressed his condolences, apologies and repentance. All the others were silent as usual, agreeing with all the anti-human crimes committed by the Russians in Ukraine. That is, do not comfort yourself that Putin alone is responsible for the terrible things. No. They are all doing this, zombied by decades of propaganda of arrogance, slavish obedience and impunity.

There is only one way to fix this. This is a military and economic defeat for Russia. Complete removal from power and influence on the people of this KGB network. External management of the whole country, from upbringing in kindergarten to leading positions of the state. All this must be permeated with suffering, repentance and relentless propaganda of the true history of this country and of human values in general. This period must take at least 40 years for two new generations of people to grow up and take action. Just as the biblical Moses led his people through the wilderness for 40 years.

Лысая гора (Lysaja mountains)

Those paying attention in 1872  
Witnessed the Russian army constructing  
A small fortress on Bald Mountain.

Once completed, it was judged  
To be of little importance  
To the military or, if we are to speak frankly, anyone else.

What to do, then? Well, it could be  
Converted into a storehouse for war surplus.  
And so it was.

One thing it did have going for it, many agree.  
It was remote from the happenstance of our surrounding world.  
In many ways an ideal place for the execution of political  
prisoners.

Tally: 200 from 1906 to 1917.  
One worthy of note: Dmitry Bogrov –  
Assassin of Pyotr Stolypin, “father” of the kulaks.

Bogrov was said to have attempted to redress  
The suffering of those, like himself, who were victims of Russian  
antisemitism.  
But, then again, he was an informant for the Okhrana.

The little fortress did manly service once more.  
Volunteers from the local pine forests  
Called it home while resisting Nazis.

Then, back to life as a storage area  
For the Red Army. Oh, and a

Radio beacon for aircraft navigation was built.

Some speak of an underground complex beneath  
The little fortress; but, in fact, only old water tanks have been  
found,  
Still filled with rain water from the 1980's.

John Burlinson

Recently I was sitting in the Kofein on Rymarska, drinking a wonderful Ethiopian coffee Ye Genet and browsing the newly purchased book of memoirs of the great linguist Yuri Shevelyov, who lived for many years in a neighboring house (across the street):

Next to me, on a metal shelf, are bottles of wine. And right in front of my eyes is the inscription on the bottle: "The winery of Prince P.M. Trubetskoy». I return to reading the book and at the very beginning I'm surprised to learn that he, the most prominent Ukrainian linguist, on whose behalf the Muscovites are writhing like devil in church – actually was a German and his born surname was Schneider. The surname Shevelyov, his father, a general of the Russian army, chosen at the beginning of World War I, so that his subordinates would not suspect him of treason, as they were fighting against the Germans and were commanded by a German named Schneider. So the Schneider decided to change his surname. He chose the surname "Shevelyov" - because it sounds "Russian". Well, there was another reason why the name started with the Cyrillic letter "Ш" [Sh] - because all the family linen and utensils of the Schneider family were decorated with monograms with the same capital letter "Ш". So General Schneider decided to become Shevelyov – to soldiers in the war were calm and bowls at home intact. But his son, who grew up in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, became a Ukrainian, and so famous. About such knotted stories sometimes (please, forgive me, Ukrainian linguist Shevelyov) the vernacular saying used: [kino i nemcy] (cinema and the Germans) ...

I paused to read the Shevelyov's book, the bottle of Trubetskoy's wine was in front of my eyes again... and reminded me of another story, where wine and Germans and Ukrainians were also knotted. And coffee, of course.

Have you ever divided your life into before and after? Have you ever realized that your world would never be the same? Have you ever looked back on your past and thought that it hadn't been your life? Have you ever thought that you would never be able to enjoy the little things again? Have you ever felt helpless?

These and hundreds of other questions were born in the head of every Ukrainian at 0500 (EE) on February 24. The moment that crossed out everything that was before. The massive wave of fear, anxiety, helplessness has covered everyone. Wherever you were, it got you.

The moment between “before” and “after” is called "The war has started". All my thoughts, dreams, concerns, complaints don't matter anymore. Being 8000km away from home, the only thing I am able to ask myself is "How can I help?". And there is no answer. I start calling my family, friends, random people and ask hundreds of questions. And my heart stops beating when there is no answer on that side. I can not breathe, I can not cry, I can not do anything.

I have a desperate necessity to be closer to my people. So I don't sleep when they sleep, trying to be aware of every alarm. I don't sleep when they are awake because I want to support them. So I don't sleep at all.

I hate the moment when I have to go outside and try to be a part of the system. People around me go to work, play with their kids, drink coffee, and live their lives. I feel nothing in common with this reality. My mind and heart are not here; they are with my people and their pain.

All I had in my previous life now does not have any value. I don't dream about a summer vacation in Italy or a new car. The only dream I have is to wake up in the morning and get the messages from all my family and friends with the only phrase "We are alive".

What can I do to help yourself and help my country? One can say that I am just a little person with no power. But the Ukrainian spirit is

unbroken, strong, and free. The more they try to humiliate us, the more we fight back.

Even if you left Ukraine many years ago and got a new passport, even if you have made a decision to live in another country, even if you have never been to Ukraine but your roots are from there, you definitely feel united with all the people of Ukraine. Each of us alone feels helpless and lost. But together we are the strength of our past and our future.

Olena Zamperini

## HIGH ALERT

Air Force fighters growl over our roof,  
supersonic rip-saws tearing through finch song,  
spring buds and St. Francis who cradles the concrete wolf

on our patio where hummingbirds feed. Desert  
sleeps far from the distant hiss of Cruise missiles  
pulverizing Ukraine streets, Putin's emails incinerate high-rises,  
amputating  
lives. 1000 towns destroyed. A Russian tank clanks, flattens a  
small car, another swerves  
into a city bus. Troops crawl with assault rifles  
to strafe the Nicholas Bridge. Bombs  
burst craters in schools, homes, hospitals, landmarks, parks.  
Putin blusters he must protect Russian rebels.  
A friend posts, we are all Ukrainians now.  
Putin says, we are all Russians. What's his  
real game? Soviet satellites, a borscht of lies  
and blood spattering cobbled streets, tattered  
sheets ripped for makeshift bandages  
to staunch torn arteries, the severed  
limbs of teens. Today, I sing for my cousins  
shuddering in the Kharkiv Metro underground, others who  
become instant guerilla fighters, their hands  
that held babies and lovers last week, cradling AR15s. They will  
never surrender. I sing for  
my Belarus ancestors who can't stop crying  
over the corpses of their children curled  
like charred snail shells in snow  
falling on the ashes of their homes Stalin torched.  
Who starts a war during a Pandemic  
in winter except another Caesar in an Armani suit immaculately

tailored, the same metallic  
gray as a missile's stunted wings?

Pamela Uschuk

## REINDEER TATTOO

*for Val Uschuk*

Long before marriage, my sister commissioned a reindeer inked blue on her shoulder blade. No Rudolf, this reindeer curled circular, a hooved nautilus, replica of a tattoo on a prehistoric woman excavated in Mongolia.

I never questioned Mongolia and reindeers, the ancestral echo heard by my sister 40 years ago. Does snow hear the shelling of Mariupol or the desperate who eat ice for food?

Ice wind blows across the last tigersvanishing from Siberia. What connection does reindeer make with a Slavic girl in America or Putin's genocide of Ukrainians? PBS News shows a mother and her kids blown up on a cobbled street, an artillery shell lodged in the dead boy's chest.

I remember on my grandma's window shelf, photos of Czech, Belarus, Ukraine ancestors—her blue-eyes, auburn hair, Siberian cousins, my grandpa's slick black thatch edging his raven eyes, all framed side by side by lace curtains streaming Michigan sun.

I never learned to play the bone flute, to stretch skin to make my own drum in the long Arctic dark when children were rounded up like caribou calves and made to light candles at altars on Easter

celebrating a saviour who never ate whale  
or sang with the blue snow howls of wolves.

Circling my forearm, six albatross fly  
etched over a calm and healing sea.  
Stars swirl in a metal bowl in our desert back yard,

water we leave out for birds and night animals.  
I find the North Star, trace a path between blue

dwarfs and red giants to make a reindeer  
who stretches her sleepy legs, paws through  
the ice crust for grasses frozen centuries in permafrost, green as  
the aurora borealis or prayers for peace.

## Four Visions of Kharkiv

The first time I saw Kharkiv was the summer of 2007. I'd been living in Moscow, studying Russian language and history at Moscow State University, though I was a tourist and writer at heart more than a resolute student. The night my visa was to expire, I took the train across the border to the greatest city of Eastern Ukraine. I was struck like a thunderbolt by the differences from Russia. Yes, Kharkiv was primarily a Russian-speaking city, and yes, there were connections to Russia but it was freer, happier, more alive than Moscow. The television was open to all discussions, the city's universities promoted global points of view, and the kind people on elegant Sumskaya Street in Kharkiv's cozy center would chat with you on any subject until the wee hours. Moscow may be a national capital, but Kharkiv is a true city of the world. I fell in love with Kharkiv. My first stay lasted seven years.

In 2014, I returned to America to help my mother and then moved to Latvia for writing purposes. But I could not resist my visions of Kharkiv. Like an absent lover I longed to embrace her again. In October 2016, I returned to her like Odysseus at last to Penelope, separated too long. Again, I was soon chatting with its people, again haunting my favorite cafés to midnight to write my novels and stories, reacquainted with a city that was so a part of me. My love was not the same. She had grown. Changes had occurred during my absence. The war in the Donbas and Russia's occupation of the Crimea had altered people's attitudes towards Russia and reminded and resurrected the horrors of the Soviet past to new generations. The statue of Lenin, icon of this insidious past, was toppled on Plóshcha Svobódy (Freedom Square) his name stripped from Prospekt Lenina replaced by Prospekt Nauky (Science Avenue). Metro stops too had shed their Soviet dubbings. Putin's aggression had pushed the Kharkiv people from Moscow, like some runaway continental drift. A political, societal, and emotional severing. Kharkiv was no longer in the Russian orbit, it was European in feel, international in view. I still reside in this wondrous Kharkiv, though now forced away. I have an apartment in the Kholodna Hora area. It is my true home.

Yet now, far away in my native state of Nevada, I see terrifying nightmare visions of my beloved city in Ukraine. Of missile strikes in Plóshcha Svobódy. Of shattered universities. Husks of buildings. Unmoving bodies in the rubble. I am awakened at night by internet messages from friends in metro stations turned to bomb shelters. Others are in refugee camps. Another can't find her parents. All because a cowardly dictator fears democracy on his doorstep. I feel powerless to help the victims of this tyrant, and guilt because I am safe here

and they and their families are in peril, fearing their futures and lives may evaporate. I empathize and sympathize but my pain pales to those of the Ukrainian people. These are Putin's weapons as much as bombs, missiles and conscripted soldiers. But it is a quickly changing world. And where there is life there is hope.

I have another vision of Kharkiv. A premonition as clear as any television image. One that will come true. Of Kharkiv rebuilt. Of a metropolis as timeless and elegant as any in Europe. Of those universities teeming with thought and debate in a way that Moscow cannot comprehend (as long as the ex-KGB controls the minds of the Russian people). These aren't abstract visions of the foolish writer, these are truths. Near futures. I will meet you, dearest friends and new friends, along Sumskaya, or on Plóshcha Svobódy, or at Kholodna Hora soon. And we will celebrate.

For Ukraine will endure. And the Ukrainian people triumph. That is the vision I trust. Слава Україні!

## **Time to Remember Ourselves**

Today is the 27th day of Russia's war against my homeland, Ukraine. As surreal as it feels to count days from the beginning of the all-out war in 21st century Europe, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is not an out-of-the-blue shocking turn of events. This day is not surprising if you paid attention to 8 years of warfare in the Ukrainian Donbas and Luhansk regions, Russia instigated and paid for, or noticed the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Maybe you can even notice a peculiar habit of countries neighboring Russia to be in a state of constant unrest and war that benefits Russia, purely by chance, of course. Nevertheless, let us admit one, on its face obvious, truth, here and now: Russia's atrocious record of war crimes, genocide, and oppression of Ukraine did not begin in recent history. Russia is and always has been an imperialist power, relentlessly trying to destroy the very spirit of Ukraine for centuries, and we have made the grave mistake of forgetting it.

The very history of Ukraine, ever since Kievan Rus' collapse, is the story of a never-ending struggle for independence, sovereignty, and freedom of self-determination. Empires were tearing our homeland apart for centuries, whether it was Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary, or the Ottoman Empire. No matter the greater armies of invading empires forcing their will on Ukraine, we never truly surrendered. Ukrainians have been spilling their blood for the dream of freedom against all odds for centuries, and continue to fight for it today. This longing and hope for freedom without imperialist oppression is the foundation of Ukrainian culture, seeping through every song, poem, and painting, reflected in the deeds of its heroes. We have survived World War I and World War II, which lead to years of Nazi occupation of Ukraine and mass murder of Jewish and non-Jewish Ukrainians. Holodomor, one of the worst famines in modern history caused by Soviet Russia's government, took the lives of more than 4 million Ukrainians, and yet we are here today. The world's largest nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, Stalin's repressions, millions of Ukrainians killed in Gulag camps, the extermination of our artists and writers by Russia known as Executed Renaissance, but the idea of free Ukraine continued to live on. Russia's Empire onslaught on everything Ukrainian in the 19th century by relentlessly devaluing our culture and traditions, prohibiting the publishing of books in the Ukrainian language via Valuev Circular and Ems Ukaz, full-fledged imperialist oppression, and yet Ukrainian language had survived, as beautiful and melodic as ever, still sounds everywhere in my country. The horrific crimes Russia had committed against Ukraine and its people through history cannot be listed because they are endless, and February 2022 is just a continuation of centuries-long attempts of Russia to destroy and subjugate Ukraine.

Russia is not a fraternal country to Ukraine and never was, but years of Soviet propaganda have done their job in the minds of Ukrainians and foreigners alike. Ukrainians were always forgiving and kind people, willing to forget and look

past any grievances of the past days and live in peace even with former oppressors and tormentors of our nation. But now, as I have survived with my family for weeks under Russian bombing and shelling of primarily Russian-speaking Kharkiv, I understood with clarity what time has arrived - it is time to remember ourselves. As the residential areas, schools, hospitals, historic buildings in the city center are being destroyed, bombs falling from Russian planes flying over my head, civilians lying dead or injured on the streets or buried under the rubble, I have remembered who we are. Ukrainians are freedom fighters and always have been. We are the nation of heroes who were never afraid to resist Russian oppression and defend Ukraine until our last breath. Generations of Ukrainians have stood against this imperialist evil and given their lives for freedom and dignity, and we have no right to be any less brave than they were. I have participated in the biggest revolution in 21st century Europe, the Maidan Revolution in 2014, where we stood united against tyranny and Russia's control over our government. Back then, we fought for human rights, freedom of speech, democracy, and our right to live in dignity as we see fit, the very same values we ought to protect now. The price of freedom is high, but we are willing to pay.

United against Russian invaders who have brought death and destruction to our peaceful country yet again, we have remembered how much we love Ukraine and everything it represents. Ukraine, like a phoenix bird, always rises from its ashes. We will fight for our freedom and win, emerging from this war better and stronger than we were. All of us together, a soldier on the frontline, a civilian who took arms, a volunteer providing aid to those in need, a firefighter doing their job in shelled cities, a doctor saving lives under air raids, a regular citizen hiding in a basement from bombs, a refugee who lost their home, and president Zelensky - we are Ukraine. Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the Heroes!

## **In a land that's far away I see**

mothers flee with children, fathers choose to fight  
a teen-aged son impatient to cradle a gun  
elders packed for transport wrapped in blankets  
a Barbie girl whose smile can make me cry

cities once filled with grand, upstanding buildings  
wrecked, disabled, crumpled burial grounds  
messages and videos from basements  
where the sheltering is sleepless, hungry, cold  
disguised behind a heavy mask of valor  
eyes reveal the fright they try to hide

teamwork fills them up, positions sandbags  
lethal cocktails arc and reach their mark  
clever hands design and build new weapons  
need that swells the heart impels the brain

My TV screen portrays it all  
within an untouched fortress wall

my leather couch has pillows, arms  
that cushion blows, protect from harm  
I sip my after-dinner tea and nibble  
a dish of dates, but the sweetness  
turns to bitter as the news rolls on and on

This war I watch unfold each day  
is really not so far away

## Another Day in Mariupol

*O rubor sangrumis  
quii de excelso illo fluxisti  
ubi Divinitas eam tetigitat*

Oh the redness of blood  
you flowed from that high place  
where the Godhead touched her

Hildegard of Bingen

He lifts the bloody sheet  
It is her  
He falls further than he thought  
possible  
just yesterday

He lifts the sheet  
blood like jewels on her cheek  
He falls  
his cheek to hers  
cold stone

a savage silence  
stills him deeper  
than he thought possible  
it's not possible  
it's her

broken  
he falls  
jewels  
on his cheek

Cate Gable

## SONS OF UKRAINE

my father, Jewish like Zelensky  
came to America in 1905  
born in Ekaterinaslav, now Dnipro  
he remembers crouching in the dark  
hiding from the soldiers  
his parents trembling with dread

he clutched his mother's hand on the dock at Southampton  
someone gave him a banana, a fruit so unfamiliar  
he bit into its skin and all  
then came the vast arched windows of the immigration hall  
at Ellis Island, so memorable after eighty years  
that great free light still filled his eyes  
*Why did they leave? we asked*  
he said, *They'd had enough*

now the children of Dnipro are embattled  
not just the Jewish kids but all of them  
the people swear they'll be another Stalingrad  
the line that evil fails to cross  
before they let the city fall

the whole world knows Ukraine has had enough  
but the soldiers keep coming, coming

# Healing

Time will pass

The memories will soften

The hurting will lessen

Bit by tiny bit

But nothing will erase any of this

My precious homeland,  
I stand proudly for you now,



always, forever.

## Yarmy's Tears

If last year somebody had come to me and said, 'Name two famous Ukrainians, fat boy, or I'll slap you around the face,' I hate to admit it, but I'd have been left with stinging cheeks.

Back then I only knew of one. I'm better informed now. Though I wish I wasn't. Today their president makes regular appearances on the TV nightly news and mayors of big cities in the country are interviewed frequently too.

The other day I watched the one Ukrainian I was previously aware of going about his business with tears streaming down his face.

Andriy Yarmolenko's business is elite sport. He's the captain of the Ukrainian national side in a game that the US perversely insists on calling soccer, even though everywhere else in the world it's known as football.

Like many top sportsmen, he earns his money playing far from home. In his case in England, at West Ham – a team in London's East End.

It was there that I saw him. Yarmy – as he's known by English football fans – was sitting on the substitute's bench as West Ham played Aston Villa.

When the manager eventually called him onto the field, he was greeted with a standing ovation from the 60,000 strong crowd. The Villa fans sportingly joined in.

Minutes later he scored a goal that put his team ahead and the place went wild. Yarmy sank to his knees and the tears poured from his eyes.

When the war broke out, Yarmy – who comes from Chernihiv, a town that's been mercilessly shelled by the Russian invading army – was put on compassionate leave. After news reached him that his wife and son had safely made it out and were now in Poland, he announced he wanted to get back to playing.

In an interview with the Ukrainian YouTube channel *Football 1/2/3* he revealed he'd rung the mayor of his hometown and asked what he should do.

He was told, and I'm paraphrasing here from reports I've seen because I don't speak Ukrainian (or any other Slavic language), he should show

people how strong Ukrainians are and how nobody will ever break their spirit.

The footballer added, 'It's scary to talk about it – to think how constantly hostilities are taking place.' He can say that again ... and he may have to. But for the moment, Yarmy's tears were more eloquent than any statement he could make. They certainly won the hearts of the fans who saw them at the game and the millions more watching on TV.

Let's hope some of Britain's ruling elite were taking note of the crowd response and now have an idea of the strength of feeling there is in the UK for giving more support to the Ukrainians in their fight.

## Glimmerings

My mother-in-law gave me six books she'd received from her mother-in-law, and I immediately gave them a place on the shelf. *The Story of Ukraine* by Marie Strutinsky Gambal (Ukrainian Workingmen's Association, Scranton PA, 1940) was intended for children, a hundred pages of stories, history, and photos. *Ukrainian Grammar* by Elias Shklanka (Manitoba, 1944), on brittle, yellowing paper, is the first Ukrainian grammar in English.

A thirty-plus page booklet, "Ukrainians: Their Rite, History, and Religious Destiny," published in Toronto, promoted Ukrainian Catholicism. A manual of prayers for Ukrainian Catholics of the Greek Rite, with the liturgy in both Ukrainian and English, was well used. All of these extoll the ancient history and culture of Ukraine.

The last two books are different. Smaller than a cell phone, with color photographs of Ukraine SSR, the two were published as a set in 1977.

My husband's grandfather was a Ukrainian Catholic priest who arrived here with his wife and three sons before World War I. He came as a missionary, and loved it here. He'd been dead over twenty years when the picture books were published, and I can only imagine how they came into his widow's possession. The little books are definitely Soviet propaganda. But it was something I found inside one of them that linked me more intimately to the current war.

Vladimir A. Gusev left his business card tucked into one of the books. He was chairman of the executive committee of the Kiev City Soviet of People's Deputies in the 1970s. I googled him but had no luck but I did find the street address. Kreshchatyk is the main street of Kyiv, and No. 36, his address in the 1970s, is today

the location of the City Council and the Kyiv City State Administration. At first, it seemed little had changed—both governments located city offices at the same address. But I was wrong. The entire street was destroyed during World War II by the retreating Soviet army. The Soviets later rebuilt it. The picture books were meant to glorify the rebuilding and bury a shameful episode.

As I follow the news of fighting in Kyiv and the surrounding area, I don't wonder at the fierce resistance of the Ukrainians. The Russians have done this before, the Ukrainians remember, and they have the edge—they know what they're fighting for. My father-in-law's occasional comments about the family history have a deeper resonance now, and my husband's ongoing research into that history ties it all together. Putin has already lost the one goal that mattered to him, subsuming Ukrainians under a Russian identity. The Ukrainians know who they are, and now so does the entire world.

I am a 29-year-old Ukrainian guy from Kharkiv. I worked and studied all my youth. At last, I had found hope and a real chance for a better life and the realization of my plans. I had found the best way for my 6 years old son, my wife and myself. This January, we enjoyed our first travel to abroad, only to immediately pay the price and be stranded outside our country and home for an indefinite period. I still have to explain all this to my child, at least where did his beautiful little world go there in Kharkov. And this I say softly, through the lips of a Ukrainian who is lucky compared to most in my country. In fact, I'm almost disappointed in humanity. I don't understand why ordinary people from Russia or anywhere take up arms and attack, why others support the invaders, or even worse, make the belligerents think that this is good. Or why so many ignore the tragedy or simply pretend to help. I don't understand anyone other than those who protect their homes and homeland. Actually, I do understand...and that's why I'm disappointed, and that's why I have nothing else to add. Only pain somewhere inside.

## So Many Questions

*It is night, where is the moon?*  
By now she should be used to  
living with fear.

She stares at a moth on the dark ceiling  
of her room, prays for sleep to bring  
relief from the muscular worry

in this country now at war.  
She wonders why the insect intrigues her so  
when suddenly it flies out of the open window.

*It is too still, where is the breeze?*  
A bright flash, ear-cracking sound, stuttering walls.  
She grabs the baby from his crib,

no time for extra clothes or food.  
She rushes down the stairs, out the door,  
*It is Sunday, why isn't there singing?*

stumbles on shaky legs,  
away from the orange glow,  
wishing for wings.

She looks over her shoulder to see the apartment  
wall gone; her bedroom exposed to the street.  
*It is Mariupol, where are the buildings?*

She doesn't know how far she will have to go,  
how heavy her tiny son will begin  
to feel in her arms, the weight

of his little body growing by the minute,

the weight in her heart  
already unbearable.

*It is spring, where are the birds?*

Bonnie Wehle

## War Means Me

I heard of wars,  
So far away,  
How this, or that, side  
Won the day.

Whilst I felt safe  
Sat here at home,  
Petting my cat  
And polishing chrome.

Then comes a day  
When I can see,  
That war is here  
And war means me.

# UKRAINE, UKRAINE

Ukraine needs help to save  
Their people from a Russian mass grave.  
Their bravery inspires us all to tears.  
and anger that their well-placed fears  
are not addressed with more help on the  
way.

But things allowed to get worse each and  
every day.

Their bravery and heroism are an  
inspiration  
Hoping all the best for their great nation.

See the interesting recent post on the Facebook of Marc Raymond Wilkins, a Swiss film director, who now is in Ukraine:

“Some of my friends accuse me of being a Russophobe. While I deal with air raids three times a day, and witness how entire Ukrainian cities, including hospitals, schools and theaters are being bombed, burying thousands of civilians under its gravel, I am being asked to “dial down the tone of my voice and accept the silent agreement of Russians to these war-crimes, because they might face prison, should they protest.”

Unfortunately, most Russians are supporting their government proudly. Only a very small minority is protesting. I respect all the Russians who are actively supporting Ukraine with aid and refuge in Europe, or protest loudly, like the Russian expats who went to the streets of Prague yesterday. But this is not enough, considering 144 million Russian citizens, who must stand up against this war.

Nina Khrushcheva, great-granddaughter of former Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and Professor of International Affairs, used very clear words in an interview just a few days ago:

“Today we (the Russians) are the new fascists of Europe. It breaks my heart. I am ashamed. We are the enemy of the world.”

I am not a Russophobe, but I am against people who stay silent while their nation turns towards fascism.”

Atlas Carries Ukraine on Her Back

Bombed out maternity wards like blackened, bruised eyes  
Mothers fit fingers in Kalashnikov triggers

Ruptured kidneys of golden petaled sunflowers  
Grandmas mix Molotov cocktails in bottles

Wheat beards whirl in the wind  
While explosions bend the sky, blast out schools

Open fly means bombs and bullets reign, fighter planes zip across  
mothers deliver in tunnels, on stretchers

Legs spread  
and pegged down, hips torn apart

Craters split into earth's open wounds,  
women sew bullet proof vests in small sizes

Where heaven began  
the rape of a country unleashed.

The Greeks got it all wrong  
Atlas was a women

Holding up the sky  
for women to fight and flee

the weight of heaven and earth  
Squarely on their shoulders.

## Earth on Life Support and Children in Big Letters

These clouds above us want to cry  
This green land beneath runs cracked and dry  
The bombs and bullets whiz in flurrying snow  
Our worries mix with ashes and soot and grow  
These man-made wars fought in wheat fields  
Sear our grain, our apples, and for what yields —  
Unfurl a flag on someone's ruined school  
Or walk on babies' bones, on women's hearts, or pools  
Of blood, the word children spelled across the ground  
Where buildings crumble in full unsparing sound  
Our forests are torched, smoke replaces the wind  
Our rivers only memory of dreams now spent and singed  
The earth our sole womb is on life support  
If not for our babes, will we let the world self abort?

## Closing remarks

“In these very serious times, we see how cultural heritage, literature, can become a target in war. Part of warfare can be the suppression of another country’s literature and cultural heritage”, – Andreas Norlén, Swedish Speaker of the Riksdag, at a literary summit concluded with a poem by the Ukrainian poet Ija Kiva. She wrote the poem on 29 August 2014 when 366 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and the tragedy in Ukraine began:

*“Here is a country. It remembers Chernobyl, the Holodomor,  
Babyn Yar, dissidents, the light-up red star,  
A hatchet proudly hanging over bruised necks  
And the enormous line for a permanently closed kiosk.”*

*Ija Kiva*

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