

“God Is a Rusyn”

An Anthology of Contemporary
Carpatho-Rusyn Literature



Translated by Elaine Rusinko
with
Bogdan Horbal and Slavomir Olejar

Edited by Elaine Rusinko



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ELAINE RUSINKO**

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For Ben and Julia, who keep me up nights.

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For this collection—the first comprehensive compilation of Carpatho-Rusyn literature in English—I have drawn on the knowledge and support of numerous scholars, writers, and friends. A language in the process of development presents unusual challenges for the translator. Given the lack of a Rusyn-English dictionary—for that matter, until very recently, the lack of any modern Rusyn dictionaries at all—I could not have translated these works without a great deal of help. Moreover, there are distinct differences in the Rusyn language as written in each of the areas from which these works are taken. Lemko Rusyn and Vojvodinian Rusyn present particular problems, and I am grateful to my co-translators and collaborators Bogdan Horbal and Slavomir Olejar for their help with authors from these regions. In addition, I wish specially to thank Bogdan for his advice on large matters, such as concept and selection, and smaller matters, such as technical details, throughout the preparation of the manuscript. The final product is enhanced by his helpful input.

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I am grateful to all my colleagues in Rusyn studies for their support and suggestions. Most of all, I thank the authors, who, in what seems to have been a spontaneous renaissance in the 1980s, began to write about the Rusyn people in the Rusyn language. I am grateful to them for sending me their books and for keeping me informed about the burgeoning Rusyn literary life in their home countries. I hope to contribute to that development by introducing their work to the English-speaking audience.

There remain numerous Rusyn writers, not included here for reasons of space or because their work was not easily available to me, who also deserve recognition and whose work I hope to include in future English-language anthologies. The young Carpatho-Rusyn literature has a promising future.

Elaine Rusinko

Translator's Note

The title of this collection, “God is a Rusyn,” comes from a poem by Ivan Petrovtsii, in which he depicts God dressed in the traditional garb of a Rusyn, sharing the Rusyns’ love for their land. This ironic Rusyn-specific image and the poet’s expression of love for the Rusyn land and people exemplify the theme and tone of much of the literature in this collection. It has been my goal to render the thoughts, feelings, images, and attitudes in English from a representative sampling of contemporary Rusyn literature.

The first item of concern for a translator is the selection of texts. For this anthology I limited my selections to the period of the Rusyn renaissance that accompanied the fall of Communism and the codification of the Rusyn language. Thus, most texts are from the last two decades. Criteria for selection include fine quality, characteristic themes, and content that is appealing to a Western audience. But it is necessary also to choose texts to which translation can do justice. Poetry and prose with narrative or philosophical content present fewer problems than texts that depend on exact rhyme and meter, or poems built on phonetic and linguistic play. In the Appendix of Rusyn-language texts, I have included a few examples of untranslatable poems that showcase inventive creativity and linguistic experimentation. Similarly, prose that is stylized or highly colloquial is not included—not because it cannot be conveyed in English, but because the necessary dictionaries and resources are not easily available. With the development of resources and the possibility of closer collaboration, I hope to return to such stories in the future.

In all texts, my strategy has been to stay as close as possible to the sense of the original and to maintain the author’s tone, whether emotional, ironic, jocular, or melancholy. I gave preference to colloquial English, although in some places awkward or stylized English is used to move the reader’s imagination in the direction of the Rusyn original. To retain the Rusyn flavor, Rusyn-specific terms are sometimes left untranslated and glossed within the text or in a footnote, as well as in the Glossary. In poetry, a flexible use of free verse, with an effort to preserve the original rhythm, best captured the style of the Rusyn poets represented. All poems and stories are complete texts, with the exception of Mykolai Kseniak’s “Tinkers’ Pots,” a collection of short sketches, from which a few complete sketches have been chosen for inclusion here.

In the texts, I have used a simplified version of the Library of Congress transliteration system, with adjustments for common usage and ease of comprehension. Thus, Mariia (Марія) has been simplified as Maria; Ivan is used consistently for the Rusyn name spelled in different dialects as Иван and Іван. Names beginning with a jotted vowel, such as Юрко, have been rendered as Yurko, rather than Iurko, which would be required by LOC transliteration. However, bibliographical citations use strict Library of Congress transliteration for Rusyn, for which a transliteration table is included here.

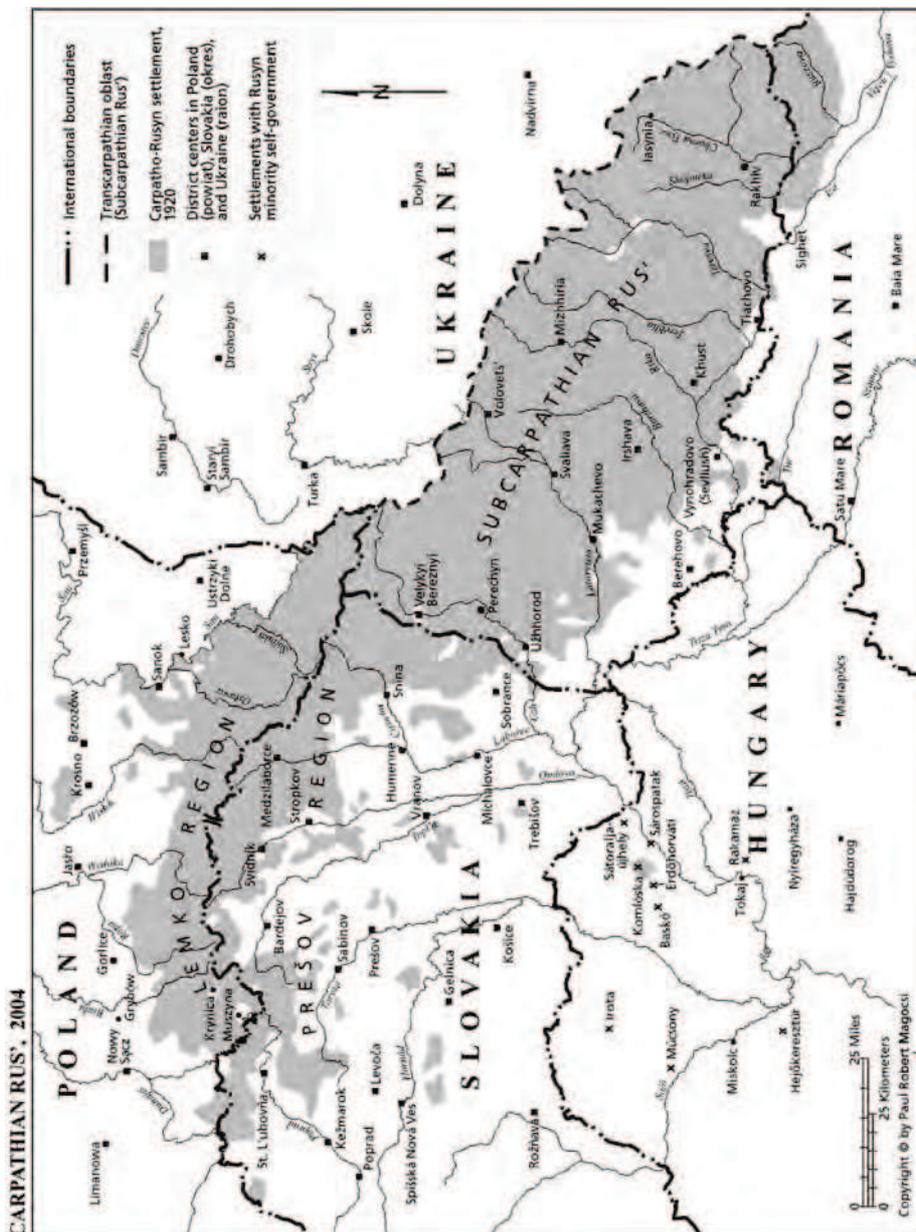
Rusyn names undergo several kinds of formal changes. Diminutives are common: Myshio and Mysh'ko for Mykhal; Yuro and Yurko for Yurii; Yulka for Yulia. In addition, Rusyn has a vocative case. In direct address, the name or word changes its form. So for example, Myshio/Mysh'ko becomes Myshiu and Mysh'ku; Yurko becomes Yurku or Yurchu; and *pan* (gentleman, sir) changes to *pane*. In direct address, Yulka changes to Yulko, and *mama/mamka* becomes *mamo/mamko*. These distinct, colorful variations in appellation carry expressive meaning and have been retained in the translation. Rusyn place names are used (Oriabyna, rather than the Slovak Jarabina), and where necessary, footnotes supply geographical explanations and historical facts.

Transliteration Tables

	<i>Rusyn</i>	<i>Vojvodinian Rusyn</i>	<i>Ukrainian</i>	<i>Russian</i>
А	a	a	a	a
Б	b	b	b	b
В	v	v	v	v
Г	h	h	h	g
Ґ	g	g	g	—
Д	d	d	d	d
Е	e	e	e	e
Є	ie	ie	ie	—
Ё	io	—	—	e
Ж	zh	zh	zh	zh
З	z	z	z	z
І	i	—	i	i
Ї	ï	ï	ï	—
И	y	i	y	i
Ы	ÿ	—	—	y
Й	i	i	i	i
К	k	k	k	k
Л	l	l	l	l
М	m	m	m	m
Н	n	n	n	n
О	o	o	o	o
Ô	ô	—	—	—
П	p	p	p	p
Р	r	r	r	r
С	s	s	s	s
Т	t	t	t	t
У	u	u	u	u
Ф	f	f	f	f
Х	kh	kh	kh	kh
Ц	ts	ts	ts	ts
Ч	ch	ch	ch	ch
Ш	sh	sh	sh	sh
Щ	shch	shch	shch	shch
Э	—	—	—	è
Ђ	î	—	—	ie
Ю	iu	iu	iu	iu
Я	ia	ia	ia	ia
Ъ	—	—	—	''
Ь	,	,	,	,

Glossary

баба, бабка	baba, babka	grandmother
Бескид, Бескиды	Beskyd, Beskyds	traditional name for a range of the Carpathian mountains in northeastern Slovakia, southern Poland, and western Ukraine
біда	bida	misfortune, trouble
Боже, Божічку	Bozhe, Bozhichku	God (vocative case)
боровічка	borovichka	juniper brandy, gin
ватра	vatra	bonfire
дівка, дівонька	divka, divon'ka	girl
дідо / дідо	dido	grandfather
дротарь	drotar'	tinker, wire-craftsman
дротарько	drotar'ko	wire-working, metalwork
голубкы	holubkŷ	stuffed cabbage
газда	gazda	farmer, householder, boss, proprietor
керпці	kerptsi	traditional Lemko leather shoes
клебан	kleban	a hat traditionally worn by older men
кум, кума	kum, kuma	god father, god mother, relative
мама, мамка	mama, mamka	mother, mom
нянє, нянько	nianio, nian'ko	father, dad
палінка / палінка	palinka	alcohol
перина	peryna	featherbed, down comforter
пирогы	pyrohŷ	dumplings stuffed with potatoes, cabbage, or other vegetables
пан	pan	gentleman, sir, Mr.
пані / пані	pani	lady, ma'am, Mrs.
паска	paska	Easter bread
ручник	ruchnyk	an embroidered towel
хуста	khusta	a large piece of cloth used to carry vegetables, fruits or hay from the fields
чати́на	chatyna	branches of evergreen trees
чуга	chuha	traditional Lemko coat



Foreword: Literature in Carpathian Rus´

Although Carpatho-Rusyn literature dates back to the sixteenth century, it emerged as a distinct creative movement only after the Revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe, which sparked a Rusyn cultural renaissance and permitted the revival of Carpatho-Rusyn identity in the ancestral Rusyn homeland. Situated at a crossroads of states, cultures, and languages, Rusyn literature has survived a history of political oppression, linguistic disorder, and cultural denigration. Today a renewed Rusyn literature, written in newly codified linguistic variants, plays a decisive role in shaping the national identity of the stateless Carpatho-Rusyn people.

The Carpatho-Rusyn homeland straddles the borders of five countries—Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. For much of the twentieth century, however, Rusyns did not officially exist in their homeland, and even today they are still struggling for recognition in Ukraine, where the Transcarpathian oblast is home to three-quarters of the approximately one million European Rusyns. This came about because after World War II, Soviet-dominated governments stubbornly denied the existence of any such ethnicity or language and instead imposed Ukrainian language and culture on Rusyns—not just in Ukraine, but in Poland and Czechoslovakia as well. Only the former Yugoslavia recognized a small population of 20,000 Rusyns, descendants of immigrants from the Carpathian region to the Vojvodina, as an official minority distinct from Ukrainians. By the late twentieth century, Rusyn identity elsewhere had seemingly evaporated or assimilated to more prominent neighboring ethnic groups.

Shortly before the fall of Communist rule, however, it became clear that Rusyns had not disappeared, and since that time a Rusyn renaissance has been underway. Today Rusyns are recognized as an official minority in Hungary, Slovakia, Poland (where they are known as Lemkos), the Czech Republic, Romania, Serbia, and Croatia. Only in Ukraine, political and cultural authorities continue to reject the notion that Rusyns are distinct from Ukrainians. While the parliament of Transcarpathia recognized Rusyns in the oblast in 2007 and while there is increasing acknowledgement of the regional distinction of Rusyn culture, the Rusyn language is still considered a dialect of Ukrainian and Rusyn culture is classified as a branch of the Ukrainian cultural tree.

One of the first projects for the newly recognized Carpatho-Rusyns was to standardize their language. As a result of political repression and economic factors that hindered widespread printing, a Rusyn literary standard was not established during the mid-nineteenth-century national awakening when other Slavic groups codified their languages. Over the centuries, the Rusyn lands have known several "official" languages, including Church Slavonic, Latin, Hungarian, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, Czech, and Slovak. For much of its history, Rusyn literature was written in a mixed language, based on the local recension of Church Slavonic, with degrees of Hungarian, Slovak, Polish, and local dialectal influences. There had been unsuccessful efforts in the 1920s and 1930s to standardize a Rusyn literary language on the basis of the vernacular in Poland and the Prešov region of Slovakia, but, except in the Vojvodina of Yugoslavia, throughout the second half of the twentieth century all the Rusyns of Eastern Europe were compelled to use Ukrainian.

The Rusyns of the Carpathian region speak several East Slavic dialects, which can be broadly classified as belonging to a western group, used in Poland and Slovakia, and an eastern group, used in the Transcarpathian oblast of Ukraine. In 1992, the First Congress of the Rusyn Language convened and decided that individual literary variants would be established for Rusyns living in Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine. Thus, it was only in 1995 that a Rusyn literary language was formally standardized in Slovakia, and in 1999 a codified standard was created for the Lemko Rusyns of Poland. Despite the official lack of recognition of Rusyns in Ukraine, efforts have been made by dedicated individuals in Transcarpathia to develop the local vernacular, which is now used increasingly in literature. A literary standard was established in the former Yugoslavia as early as the 1920s. The Third Congress of the Rusyn Language, held in 2007, began to discuss the creation of a Rusyn *koiné* that could be used in all regions of Carpathian Rus'.

The progress achieved since 1989 in the official recognition of Carpatho-Rusyns and the codification of the Rusyn language has for the first time in history created favorable conditions for the development of Rusyn literature. Through centuries of cultural oppression under the Habsburg monarchy and later the Soviet empire, Rusyn literature has persisted in various forms and in several languages, and its history is one of resolute but ill-fated initiatives. Historical evidence suggests the existence of literary activity in Carpathian Rus' as early as the tenth or eleventh century. Up to the fifteenth century, Carpatho-Rusyn manuscripts belong to the supranational Church Slavonic linguistic tradition, but from the sixteenth century, Carpatho-Rusyn texts manifest distinctive linguistic and cultural features. In the wars that wracked the Carpathian region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Rusyns felt pressure from both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, and in response, they found a way to preserve and protect their religious and cultural heritage in the

Uniate (later Greek Catholic) Church, which retained the use of Church Slavonic and other Orthodox customs but came under the jurisdiction of the pope. Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Rusyns had fashioned a unique “in-between” national narrative—between East and West, Orthodoxy and Catholicism, orature and literature, Slavonic and Latin, and the Hungarian or Polish standard language and the Rusyn vernacular. In early manuscripts, a distinctive Rusyn voice can be perceived in miscellanies and interpretive gospels, polemical tracts, and *virshi* and spiritual songs, as well as in celebratory odes written in Church Slavonic and Latin, and in a few texts in Rusyn vernacular.

The beginning of a truly Rusyn literature came only with the national awakening of the mid-nineteenth century, when Aleksander Dukhnovych (1803–65), who is recognized as “the national awakener” of the Rusyns, began the elaboration of a Rusyn cultural tradition. Dukhnovych put literature firmly in the service of the national cause, and in poetry, prose, history, journalism, and drama, he directly addressed the Rusyn people about the realities of their existence. Dukhnovych was the author of the first primer for Rusyns, *Reader for Beginners* (*Книжиця читалная для начинающих/Кnyzhytzia chytalnaia dlia nachynaiushchych*, 1847), which contained a long didactic poem in Rusyn vernacular that challenged negative stereotypes and advocated educational enlightenment and national regeneration. Also included in the primer was Dukhnovych’s lyrical poem “Life of a Rusyn” (“Жизнь Русина”/ “Zhyzn’ Rusyna”), which extols earthy reality in the spirit of romanticism and reveals a deep sympathy for the innate nobility of the downtrodden and unappreciated Rusyn peasant. Together with his play *Virtue Is More Important than Riches*¹ (*Добродѣтель превъшаетъ богатство/Dobroditel’ prevyshaet bohatstvo*, 1850), these works constitute Dukhnovych’s creative formulation of the Rusyn national character. He also celebrated Rusyn national feeling in the poem “Dedication” (“Вручаніе”/ “Vruchanie,” 1851) with the famous lines that have become an inspirational slogan for Rusyns everywhere and are sung as a national anthem: “I was, am, and will be a Rusyn” (Я Русин был, есмь, и буду/Ya Rusyn byl, esm’ y budu).

Dukhnovych wrote his popular play *Virtue Is More Important than Riches* in a broad vernacular that would be most comprehensible to the largest number of Rusyn spectators, suggesting a purposeful attempt to work out a standard literary language for the Rusyns of the Hungarian Kingdom. He was succeeded by Aleksander Pavlovych (1819–1900), who wrote poems in the Rusyn vernacular that dealt directly with social conditions and articulated the experiences of a people suffering under cultural and political domination and

¹ Aleksander Dukhnovych, *Virtue Is More Important than Riches: A Play in Three Acts*, trans. Elaine Rusinko (New York: Columbia University Press / East European Monographs, 1994).

economic oppression. In the Lemko Region of Poland as well, there were efforts to introduce vernacular Lemko Rusyn as a literary language. Short stories, historical tales, and memoirs were written by writers such as Vladymir Khÿliak (1843–93) and Petro Polianskii (1863–1910), who emphasized the local geographic and cultural landscape. Lemko-Rusyn literature, however, developed close ties with Old Ruthenian and Russophile centers in eastern Galicia and increasingly used a mixed language based on Russian.

Similarly, in the face of growing Magyar nationalism and the increasing assimilation of the Rusyn intelligentsia, Dukhnovych adopted a Slavophile orientation, an affiliation with Russian culture and the Russian language, as a means of securing the survival of his small Slavic island in the Magyar sea. The work of Dukhnovych and his circle outlined a broad subversive position that would become the basic stance of Rusyn literature for the remainder of the nineteenth century. The challenge to the founders of Rusyn literature at this stage in its development was to assert and maintain a unique national identity, while still claiming an affiliation with the greater Slavic cultural world and attempting to secure a position for Rusyn culture within the Austro-Hungarian political and cultural context. Carpatho-Rusyn literature of the mid-nineteenth century flowed in two parallel streams—one striving toward the expression of universal themes on the sophisticated level of established European culture, the other looking to more local sources of inspiration and voicing indigenous concerns in a popular idiom.

In Subcarpathian Rus', the second half of the nineteenth century was marked by a new round of cultural oppression. Rusyn writers found a sense of belonging and security by stressing their connection to Russia, by expressing Slavophile aspirations, and by using the Russian literary language, albeit imperfectly. In a seemingly counterintuitive move, Rusyn patriots resisted official Hungarian promotion of an independent Rusyn culture and language, renamed "Ruthenian," which they saw as a step toward Magyar assimilation, which was, in fact, proceeding apace. The Greek Catholic bishop of the time, Shtefan Pankovych, not only did not support the Rusyn cultural movement, but he issued an anathema against it, announcing, "If we live under the Magyars, we should become Magyars." Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, writers such as Aleksander Mytrak (1837–1913), Anatolii Kralyts'kyi (1835–94), Ivan Sil'vai (1838–1904), Yevhenii Fentsyk (1844–1903), and Yulii Stavrovs'kyi-Popradox (1850–99), who are honored as the second generation of Rusyn awakeners, wrote poetry in a Subcarpathian version of Russian and thematically identified Rusyn culture with that of Russia.

Among the Lemkos also, literature became a weapon in the struggle for ethnic self-consciousness. It helped to define the Lemko Region as a distinct cultural and ethnic entity, albeit within the context of an East Slavic/Common Russian cultural and patriotic framework. For both Lemkos and Subcar-

pathian Rusyns, Russophilism was a logical defense against cultural domination by the governing power. But whatever spiritual nourishment Russian culture may have provided, the Rusyn dependence on Russian models greatly impeded the construction of an authentic national literature. At the end of the nineteenth century, Rusyn literature, and in fact, the Rusyn ethnos, seemed to be in grave danger.

The First World War and the subsequent dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire created an atmosphere that was conducive to the revival of Rusyn identity, and the interwar years of the twentieth century saw a renaissance for Rusyn culture. Following the collapse of Austria-Hungary, Subcarpathian Rus' (Czech: Podkarpatská Rus) became part of Czechoslovakia, the Lemko Region came under Polish rule, and the Rusyns living in the Vojvodina region of southern Hungary became part of the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. For the first time, the Rusyn intelligentsia was relatively free to work out their own cultural identity and to express it in their own language and literature. In the Czechoslovakian province of Subcarpathian Rus', where the majority of Rusyns lived, Rusyn functioned as an official language in schools and government administration. Civic organizations, newspapers, publishing houses, theaters, and artistic life flourished.

However, shaped by its history of oppression, the Rusyn community was now fragmented along linguistic, religious, and political lines. The emergence of Ukraine as one of the founding republics of the Soviet Union and the activity of Ukrainophile cultural and political leaders in the tolerant atmosphere of Subcarpathian Rus' advanced the Ukrainian orientation and the Ukrainian language among Rusyns. As a result, two opposing versions of the "Rusyn community" emerged—one continuing to affirm the Russian identity of Rusyns, the other asserting that Rusyns were, in fact, Ukrainians. While both sides looked to local tradition and expressed a sense of Rusyn patriotism, the body of literature they produced during the 1920s and 1930s was diverse in language and content. Vasyl' Grendzha-Dons'kyi (1897–1974) was the first Subcarpathian author to use literary Ukrainian in his lyric poetry and novels of social protest. Yulii Borshosh-Kum'iats'kyi (1905–78) and Sevastiian Sabol (pseud. Zoreslav, 1909–2003) also believed that Rusyns could best survive by adapting to Ukrainian culture. By contrast, Russophile poets such as Andrii Karabelesh (1906–64), Mykhail Popovych (1908–56), and Andrii Patrus-Karpats'kyi (1917–80) stressed the Rusyns' cultural connection to Russia. Using literary Russian, these authors expressed the same themes and emotions as the Ukrainophiles but appealed to the concept of a common-Russian (*obscherusskii*) culture for identification and support.

In the intense Russophile-Ukrainophile polemics of the interwar years, the Rusyn voice was scarcely heard. Finally, amid the international crises that preceded the coming of World War II, Subcarpathia achieved a short-lived

period of autonomy (1938–39) and exactly one day of independence (March 15, 1939) before being annexed by Hungary. Literature was again compelled to adapt to political circumstances. Ironically, it was only during the World War II years that a literature based on the Rusyn vernacular language finally arose, and writers emerged from the crippling Russian-Ukrainian rivalry into a Rusyn version of modernism. Unfortunately, whatever promise this new Rusynophile orientation may have held was rendered futile by its dependence on the odious pro-Nazi Hungarian occupiers and was extinguished entirely at the close of World War II, when Subcarpathian Rus' was annexed to the Soviet Union and Rusyns were declared to be Ukrainians.

In Poland as well, the interwar years were a period of growth for Lemko-Rusyn identity in literature. Writers such as Ivan Rusenko (1890–1960) wrote patriotic and inspirational verses in the Lemko-Rusyn language, and Dymytrii Vyslotskii (pseud. Van' o Hunianka, 1888–1968) wrote satiric stories about Lemko life in the vernacular language. Together, they created a distinct Lemko orientation in Rusyn literary evolution and provided a foundation for the subsequent standardization of the Lemko-Rusyn literary language. However, the effort to introduce a Ukrainian national identity also had success in the Lemko region. Writers—some of Lemko origin and others non-Lemkos—wrote propagandistic, didactic works for Lemko audiences. The greatest Lemko lyrical poet, Bohdan Ihor Antonych (1909–37), immortalized his native Lemko Region in Ukrainian-language poetry.

Thus, the interwar years of the twentieth century provided a rebirth for Rusyn literary culture, if not a definite Rusyn direction. This period of progress was ended by World War II, which had devastating consequences for Rusyns. In 1945, Subcarpathian Rus', the former autonomous province of Czechoslovakia, was annexed to what was described as the "Soviet Ukrainian motherland," a decision made with no general plebiscite and no Carpatho-Rusyn representation. Traditional Carpatho-Rusyn identity was uprooted, along with the Rusyn language, religion, and the traditional Rusyn way of life. The Greek Catholic Church was outlawed and the nationality question was resolved by Soviet decree. Based on a decision made by the Communist party of Ukraine in December 1945, all Rusyns, regardless of what they may have called themselves, were forcibly listed in official documents as Ukrainians. The Rusyn language was banned in schools and in all publications.

Similarly, in the Prešov region of Czechoslovakia, Rusyns were subjected to collectivization, the liquidation of their church and, after 1952, forced ukrainianization. The people responded by identifying themselves as Slovaks and sending their children to Slovak schools, leading to massive national assimilation. The Czechoslovak state created a wide range of Ukrainian cultural organizations for Rusyns. Writers were forced to switch from Rusyn or Russian to Ukrainian, and scholars began to study the literary work of the

“Ukrainians of Eastern Slovakia” within a socialist political paradigm. During the Prague spring of 1968, Carpatho-Rusyns in the Prešov Region, whose numbers had declined by two-thirds since forced ukrainianization was instituted, demanded the return of their nationality and the re-establishment of Rusyn schools and publications. Scholarly and broad-based efforts were cut short, however, by the invasion of the country by the Soviet Union, and within a year, Czechoslovak authorities had once again banned all activity that might in any way be connected with a distinct Carpatho-Rusyn identity.

An even worse calamity befell the Lemko Rusyns in Poland. From 1944 to 1947, the Lemko-Rusyn population was subjected to deportation and resettlement from their Carpathian homeland at the hands of Polish Communist authorities. Some 100,000 Lemkos were deported to Soviet Ukraine; and in the 1947 Vistula Operation, 50,000 to 60,000 Lemkos were deported and resettled in the western and northern territories of Poland. Not only did these resettlements deprive the Lemkos of their property, they also severely damaged the Lemko community and culture by scattering the population among different towns and villages, since it was ordered that Lemkos compose no more than ten percent of the population in any single village or town. Since 1957, a few thousand deportees have managed to return to their Carpathian homeland, but there has been no compensation for their losses, and the Lemko community remains scattered and fragmented. These tragic events naturally had a deleterious effect on Lemko culture, and they are central to Lemko cultural consciousness down to the present, providing a poignant theme for writers, artists, and filmmakers.

Of all European Rusyns, those living in Yugoslavia enjoyed the most favorable conditions for national and cultural development in the twentieth century. The beginning of conscious literary creativity among Vojvodinian Rusyns dates from the early nineteenth century; the first separately published volume in the Rusyn language, a book of poems by Havriil/Gabor Kostel'nik (1886–1948) appeared in 1904. Kostel'nik also published the first grammar of the Vojvodinian-Rusyn language in 1923. The Rusyn publishing house *Ruske Slovo* was established in 1936 to publish Rusyn books and periodicals, and a department of Rusyn language and literature was created at the University of Novi Sad in 1975. There is a Museum of Rusyn Culture and a Rusyn Art Gallery in Ruski Kerestur, where the population is overwhelmingly Rusyn. The Petro Riznich Diadia Rusyn National Theater, which performs all its plays in the Vojvodinian variant of the Rusyn language, opened in 1969, performing in Ruski Kerestur and Novi Sad. Vojvodinian Rusyn literature—with its roots in East Slavic culture and close ties to the South Slavic intellectual world within which it developed, but written in a language that shares East and West Slavic characteristics—represents a unique Slavic *mélange*.

Thus, except for the Rusyns of Yugoslavia, after 1945 Carpatho-Rusyns had officially ceased to exist in Europe. Along with them, Rusyn literature disappeared in the Rusyn homeland. Ukrainian was declared the only acceptable literary language, and all local feeling and loyalties were officially replaced by Communist ideals. Rusyn writers were then subjected to the demands of Socialist Realism, and any traces of a distinctive Rusyn literature disappeared. Only a few writers, mostly amateur authors living in the countryside, were allowed to publish lyrical poetry and stories in Rusyn dialect that dealt with nature, village life, and traditions, although even dialectal texts generally had to be "ukrainianized" in order to be published. In Poland, the Lemko-Rusyn language could be found only in the Lemko section ("Lemkivska storinka") of Poland's Ukrainian-language newspaper *Nashe slovo*. The literature published there was limited to a popular, folk orientation and was propagandistic in nature, promoting the view that Lemkos are a branch of the Ukrainian nationality. The question of Rusyn identity among the Lemkos would officially return only during brief periods of political thaw (1956, 1980–81). In fact, it seemed that Rusyn literature, which had managed to survive centuries of oppression under the Habsburg empire, had fallen victim to Soviet domination almost everywhere in the Eastern European homeland.

Since the fall of Communism in 1989, however, the situation has altered significantly. While Rusyns in Ukraine are still struggling for their name and language, in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Romania, Carpatho-Rusyns are now recognized as a national minority and have established community organizations that promote a Rusyn ideology. The Rusyns of the Vojvodina, on the other hand, were overtaken since the fall of Communism by wars and economic troubles that have presented challenges to their national and cultural development. During the 1991 conflict between Serbs and Croats, Rusyns were caught in the middle, since there were Rusyn settlements in both regions. Several Rusyn communities in eastern Croatia were destroyed, and the battle for Vukovar resulted in numerous Rusyn civilian losses. After the collapse of Yugoslavia in 1992, Serbia and Montenegro formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which included the Vojvodina. Since 2003, Rusyn-occupied territory has been part of both the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and the Republic of Croatia, leaving Vojvodinian Rusyns divided by a national border. Today, the Vojvodina, with a population of about two million, is one of the most ethnically diverse territories in Europe. Rusyns represent less than one percent of the population, although unofficial data suggest there may be as many as 35,000 Rusyns.

Everywhere in the European homeland, Rusyn organizations promote the resurrection and reinvigoration of Rusyn culture. In Poland, alongside organizations formed before 1995, the Lemko Rusyns have established a foundation (Rutenika Foundation for the Support of the Lemko Minority), whose goal is

to secure Polish and European Union funding for publications, education, and cultural preservation projects. In Hungary, Rusyns are represented by self-governing communities, which receive state funds for cultural activity. In the sphere of education, Rusyn language and culture are taught at the university level at the Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture at Prešov University in Slovakia, the Advanced School of Education (Akademia Pedagogiczna) in Krakow, and the University of Novi Sad in Serbia. In addition, research and publishing on Rusyn topics is conducted in the Department of Ukrainian and Rusyn Philology at the School of Higher Education in Nyíregyháza, Hungary. Even in Ukraine, where the government gives no support to Rusyn-language education, a private network of “Sunday schools,” initially financed by private individuals and organizations in North America, preserves and propagates Rusyn language and culture. In Serbia, the Rusyn National Theater now has a professional full-time staff, and in Slovakia the professional Aleksander Dukhnovych Theater in Prešov performs plays from the repertoire of world drama in the Rusyn language. In all these countries, Rusyn-language newspapers and magazines are published and distributed widely, and two publishing houses (Narodný novynký in Prešov, Slovakia, and the Valerii Padiak Publishing House in Uzhhorod, Ukraine) specialize in Rusyn-language or Rusyn-related books. To encourage the creation of original creative literature in the Rusyn language, the Aleksander Dukhnovych Prize for Rusyn Literature, funded by Steven Chepa, a Canadian businessman and philanthropist of Rusyn heritage, has been granted annually since 1997 to an author whose work makes a substantial contribution to Rusyn-language literature. Many of the Dukhnovych Prize laureates are represented in this volume.

In poetry and artistic prose, Rusyn writers responded quickly to the fall of Communism. Many who had previously made a career using Ukrainian, Slovak, or Polish now turned to some form of the Rusyn language and applied their talent and expertise to rejuvenating a Rusyn national literature. Not surprisingly, one of the most important thematic concerns is Rusyn identity—its history, survival into the present, and its preservation for the future. Creative writers, of course, have always been important in shaping national identities, and recent studies of nation formation have emphasized the creative element of cultural construction that underlies the process. As literary theorist Homi Bhabha has indicated, the literature of transnational border regions may hold lessons for contemporary culture: “Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees—these border and frontier conditions—may be the terrains of world literature.”² Carpathian Rus' is just such a transnational frontier in the Slavic

² Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 12.

world. A representative sampling demonstrates the variety, scope, and hybridity of the literature of the Rusyn national revival, representing an effort to create a national literature by blending cultural traditions and ethnicity in defiance of state and linguistic boundaries.

UKRAINE

Translated by Elaine Rusinko

Vladymyr Fedynshynets'

VLADYMÝR FEDÝNÝSHÝNETS' was born in the Rusyn village of Repynne in Transcarpathia, Ukraine, in 1943. He completed his studies at the Pedagogical School in Mukachevo in 1961 and the philological faculty of Uzhhorod State University in 1966. He taught special education in eastern Ukraine, then worked as a journalist in Uzhhorod. During the last years of Soviet rule, Fedynshynets' was one of the initiators of the Rusyn movement in Subcarpathian Rus'. He was among the founders of the Society of Carpatho-Rusyns (1990) and founding editor of its newspaper *Podkarpats'ka Rus'*.

A member of the Ukrainian Writers' Union since 1983, Fedynshynets' has worked in all literary genres, producing more than fifty books of Ukrainian-language poetry, stories, novels, and essays. Calling himself a "Ukrainian-language Rusyn writer," he devoted several literary works to Rusyn themes, including the novel *Forest Brigands* (*Brantsi lisu*, 1993), the long poem *Awakener* (*Budytel'*, 1993), and a stream-of-consciousness novel *Father Dukhnovych* (*Otets' Dukhnovych*, 1994). His two-volume *Silver Silhouettes* (*Sribni syluety*, 1994) is a collection of 800 verse portraits of individuals who have played a role in Rusyn cultural history.

In 1999, Fedynshynets' began writing and publishing poetry in Rusyn. In *We Are a Teardrop on the Earth* (*Mý—slýzynka na zemly*, 1999), *Ruthenia, My Ruthenia* (*Ruteniyo moya, Ruteniyo*, 2001), and *Avante, avangarde!*, (2002), he presents poems, mostly miniatures, in unrhymed free verse. A modernist in style, Fedynshynets' experiments with language and form, and his poems brim with untranslatable puns, alliteration, wordplay, and striking metaphors. In 2004, Fedynshynets' was awarded the Aleksander Dukhnovych Prize for Rusyn literature.

[From *Mý—slyžynka na zemly*]

When I die
 And when after death my human soul
 Passes into some other thing,
 Say, into a rose,
 Then that red rose
 Will become Rusyn.
 And it will live the longest
 In the autumn garden
 Right up until winter.
 And when after death my human soul
 Passes, let's say, into an aspen—
 Then that tree will become Rusyn
 And it will be the last to fade in the thicket,
 Out of which comes a *Hutsul* pony.³
 And when after death my human soul
 Passes, let's say, into a *Hutsul* pony,
 Then that pony will become Rusyn.
 And he will be
 The very last to fall ...
 And he will become the prey of an eagle.
 Oh, when after death my human soul
 Passes into a golden eagle,
 Then I guarantee
 That not only will no sort of vermin
 Be able to hide in the damp earth—
 But I will vigilantly guard
 From the heights of heaven
 The primordial borders of Subcarpathian Rus'.



³ A breed of horse, indigenous to the Carpathian mountains and first mentioned in 1603, which is known for its hardiness, strength, calmness, and ability to withstand tough environmental conditions.

An astral horse
Began to neigh loudly in Central Europe
For
It lost a shoe.
(Which became the Carpathian Mountains.)
I, a Rusyn, was the first to hear it.
I, a Rusyn, was the first to see it.
For this horseshoe is my own.
(It was not soon apparent
On the Earth
But now it has become
The Hallmark of the Rusyns.)



The Danubian Basin—
My brightly colored *ruchnyk*,⁴
Which my industrious ancestors
Rolled out from the ridges of the Carpathians,
To whiten in the sun.
Embroidered on it are flowers,
And trees,
And birds and beasts,
And people ...
And everything is in cross-stitch,
In squares, in lines, in crosses ...
One only needs to be able to read
The history of Heaven-space
And one's own history,

⁴ An embroidered towel, often used to adorn holy icons.

Carpatho-Rusyn history,
On this, our Danubian *ruchnyk*.



The air in Verkhovyna,⁵
Like thick sour cream:
Not only can you breathe it—
You can cut it into pieces with a knife
And take it back with you to town.



Consider:
This book appears—
And world literature
Grows by a billionth of a micron.
You don't believe it?
Please, measure it, to be sure.



Poetry—
My faithful donkey,
On which through the Carpathian wasteland I ride

⁵ The upper mountainous region in Subcarpathian Rus' just below the crests of the Carpathians.

And ride and ride ...
Where not even oats grow.
What will I feed him tomorrow?



The full moon
Gazes sadly into my window.
But I
Am not full enough in reason
to understand in full
what is happening
in the inaccessible sky.



Who can calculate for me
how many times in my life
I have pushed the elevator buttons?
Or—forgotten my key in the lock?
Or—tied my shoes?
Or—greeted someone “Hello”?
Or ... or ... or ...
I know only,
That I am a fifty-five-year-old young man.
Old!
Or is it?



As yet a blank sheet.
A thought of genius
Can still be written on it.
It's not too late.
It's still possible ...
Maybe, it will.
No, —
Not now ...



If the transmigration of souls exists,
then my soul
will come back as a cat,
which you will stroke
on your knees—
against the grain.



Five years I struggled
with a foreign language,
It did not let me go home.
It did not allow
my native language
into my heart.
But the mother-tongue is patient.

She would wait even a thousand years
Until at last I would realize
That she had never left my heart.
She, being kind and trusting,
Had allowed in—
Only for a moment!—
An ungrateful foreigner.



Our mother tongue!
How is it?!
It was,
It is,
But will it still be tomorrow and the day after?
God,
How many lances have been broken
Over the last two hundred years!
I brandish one more lance—
Not to strike the wound,
Not to chafe the wound,
Not to open the wound,
But to heal the wound.
... Will I hit the mark?



Torun⁶ and Toronto—
Friends.
For here and there

⁶ A Rusyn town in the Mizhhiria region of Transcarpathia.

Live Rusyns.
But
Both here and there
They are restless.
Though here—they are at home.



Oh, the paradox!
I am so troubled at heart,
May God preserve you from such!
But the more I am troubled
The higher and firmer I stand
As a Rusyn.
Like the sky.
Like cement.



[From *Ruteniyo moya, Ruteniyo*]

They will awaken, my people,
How long can they sleep?!
For two centuries already they have slept,
So as not to be afflicted by the sun.
How long can they shut their eyes,
So as not to see?!
They will hear at last, my people,
What is shouted at them.
For how long can they stop up their ears,
So as to hear nothing?!
They will prophesize, my people.
For how long can they be silent?!
Else they will forget how to speak.



A hard life.
But I rejoice
That I am alive.
It would be a shame,
If I did not live in the world,
And if my life were easy, without me.



In the grave the jacket will rot,
But the lapel pin—
An emblem with a bear⁷—
Will remain.
Archeologists will dig up my skeleton
And from the pin with the bear
They will determine,
That here lie the remains
Of the last Carpatho-Rusyn.



Every blessed day
I scold myself,
For doing so little.
It should be more.

⁷ The Carpatho-Rusyn crest depicts a brown bear.

But where is that line, that level,
Where it would be clear:
This is enough,
And this is not?
Levels
Slip and slide
Like devils.



The Bolsheviks
Rush to return to power.
But they have already been.
I will not exchange freedom of speech
For a new pair of trousers.
I'll wear my ragged pants,
But in freedom.



I'm getting old:
The time has come
To bring in the harvest of prizes.
With modesty—in order:
I won the regional prize,
Am trying for the Dukhnovych,
And the path is clear to the Nobel.
Let my enemies look out!



My dear wife—
My left hand.
And I'm a lefty.



My wife, in forty years
I've said
Many lovely words
About love, about life ...
I painted lovely pictures ...
But we need another forty,
Before all that I've said and painted
Might come true.



You can steal a cat or a dog,
But they will come back home.
From a house you can steal a television,
Or money, or whatever.
From my Armenian friend
The Turks stole a mountain—Ararat.
And they arrested him
And won't let him return home.
But you can also steal a people's history,
As it was stolen from me, a Rusyn.



[From *Avante, avangarde!*]

For you I would pluck
A star from the sky,
If only
Afterwards
You wouldn't ask for three more.
Because three more
I couldn't manage.
Even if you loved me.

Ivan Petrovtsii

IVAN PETROVTSII (b. 1945) is a poet, editor, and translator. He completed a degree program in French language and literature at Uzhhorod State University in 1973 and is well known as a translator of poetry from French, Hungarian, Slovak, German, and Russian into Ukrainian. He taught elementary school (1973–75) and worked as a journalist for various newspapers in Soviet Transcarpathia. He is the author of thirteen Ukrainian-language books of poetry and prose. His fourteenth book was *Dialektaria, or a Sweet Little Book of the Rusyn Language in Verse (Dialektarii, abo zh myla knyzhochka rusyns'koï bysidy u virshakh*, 1993), a defense and dictionary of Rusyn lexical items in verse.

During the last years of the Soviet regime, Petrovtsii welcomed the Rusyn national revival in Transcarpathia and began to publish in Rusyn. His first collection of poems in Rusyn, *Our Songs (Nashi spivanky*, 1996), created a literary and political sensation with its denigration of radical Ukrainian nationalists and the government of Ukraine. Petrovtsii went on to publish a collection of translations from world poetry into Rusyn called *Our Songs and Others (Nashi y nynashi spivanky*, 1999), a collection of Rusyn erotic poetry, *Scoundrel Songs (Bytangüs'ki spivanky*, 2003), and *Last Songs (Poslidni spivanky*, 2004). These are collected in *Songs (Spivanky*, 2006). He was awarded the Aleksander Dukhnovych Prize for Rusyn Literature in 1998.

Petrovtsii writes in the style of folk poetry, using traditional meter and rhyme and the earthy vernacular of his native village of Osoi. The content of his early books ranges from a celebration of the ordinary events of Rusyn life (weddings, customs, superstitions), to light and jovial drinking songs, to verse describing the more dismal aspects of Rusyn reality—poverty, unemployment, and alcohol abuse. In his latest collection, he takes a somber tone and turns to more meditative and philosophical themes.

[From *Nashi spivankŷ*. Reprinted in *Spivankŷ*.]

A Short Conversation with Napoleon

I was and am a Rusyn. And I will
Have a purely Rusnak⁸ nature.
I used to work the harvest
In Rostov and Kirovohrad.⁹

In Komi¹⁰ I went timbering,
And to Kamchatka¹¹ building houses ...
Wherever the devil might send me,
I imprinted the seal of my work.

I used to take my suitcases,
Stuff my rags into carpetbags,
Tie them with twine, and take to my heels.
Around the “unbreakable Union”¹² I wandered.

The Union collapsed, the borders ruptured.
I did not lay aside my suitcase.
I was and am a Rusyn. And now
The sound of my sandals will be heard in Europe.

A train took me to France. To Paris.
Bags like mine are not seen here.
At the station I simply sat down on the curb,
And had me a few bites of ham.

More than one Frenchman drew near
When he saw how I crunched my onion.
One ma’amselle even asked for some bacon,
But I come back at her: “No use gawking!”

First I set off for Place Pigalle,

⁸ A colloquial term for Rusyns.

⁹ Cities in southern Russia and central Ukraine.

¹⁰ A forested area of northern Russia.

¹¹ A peninsula in the Russian Far East on the Pacific Ocean.

¹² The Soviet national anthem acclaimed the “unbreakable Union.”

The girls there are just my style—
Big tits, big asses—but big-mouthed!
I'd try for one, but I have to hold onto my bag.

After Pigalle—Place d'Etoile, Versailles ...
I went everywhere, anywhere I liked.
But sadly, my beautiful suitcase,
Some *chuchmek*¹³ stole at the Sorbonne.

In two days I emptied my food sacks,
And in my baggage there's nothing to eat.
A job? But they're not hiring anywhere—
At least, they say, not folks like me.

To hell with the French! After all,
I was accepted in Rostov and Kamchatka,
And only here in dirty Paris ...
But then I had an idea:

I'll find the mayor of this dull town,
We'll have a heart to heart talk.
After all, I came here not as a beggar,
After all, I came here to work!

For three days I searched Paris for the chief.
I visited their mayories, their priories, and prefectures.
To my mind, the local gentlemen are stupid,
And the women, if not whores, are fools.

Then I had a thought—in the madhouse in Berehovo,¹⁴
A certain wise patient once told me
That in France Napoleon is tops,
And I found Napoleon at once!

This Napoleon is a real boss!
On Place Vendôme he stands like a lord,
In an emperor's toga, all proud-like,
With the look of a General Secretary.

¹³ A pejorative term for a dark-skinned person.

¹⁴ A city in Transcarpathia near the Hungarian border.

I go up to him timid as a fawn,
 And as God demands, I say “*Slavaisusu!*”¹⁵
 You see, I just arrived from Berehovo ...
 So excuse me, I had to come ...”

Then Napoleon tore off his toga
 And stretched out his hand. “*Slava y naviky!*”¹⁶
 Today is not a reception day,
 But I’ll gladly greet a man from the village.”

And here I shout, “What! You’re a polyglot?
 You even speak Rusnak?”
 “Why, everyone does. The most honored peoples in Europe
 Are the French and the Rusyns.

“I remember still, back in Corsica I learned
 To pronounce Rusyn words precisely:
Tsobyŕknuty, zdo barytysia, l’ofa,
Mankovyŕ, fŕska, nashchyvliaty ...”¹⁷

“I remember, you visited Russia ...”
 “Let’s not talk about that,
 Because now you’re visiting Paris,
 And you dare to cuss this town ...”

“Yes, and if you wish, I’ll cuss you too,
 In this town you’re the boss,
 And what is beautiful here? Whores!
 The Soviet mafia is great too, but ...”

“Don’t speak against the mafia,
 Here we have a national mafia.
 The Louvre is national, and so am I.
 But let’s not go into detail.”

“I’m not going into anything. Find me
 Some kind of work in this town.
 Until I make some good money here

¹⁵ *Slava Isusu Khrystu* (Glory to Jesus Christ) is the standard Rusyn greeting.

¹⁶ The standard response is *Slava naviky* (Glory forever).

¹⁷ Random Rusyn words with funny and difficult pronunciations.

I won't be going anywhere."

Bonaparte looks at me
And says, "What can you do?
What did you study? Are you able
To work in our French fashion?"

"Yoi! Work like you?! And you're the boss here.
If you want, I'll follow your example.
You go take a little rest,
I can stand here a bit in your place."

"If you think I'll take your suitcases,
And you'll put on my toga ...
Even in a toga you would be carrying bags,
Spat upon, ragged, and poor!

"Only I stand here. And you stand in your home.
Whoever wants to live with us, let him come.
I've seen Berehovo, and Osoi¹⁸ as well,
I know that we have what you don't."

"I didn't see you in Osoi."
"Where were you,
When I passed through with my soldiers!
Don't wriggle out of it, tell me,
What can you do with your own hands?!"

"I can teach children in school
To speak French." "What?!"
Have you forgotten that you're in France?
Well?! Now you've gone pale.

"That's what Soviet power did for you.
No one is good for anything.
Only one thing you turn out well—debts,
You owe here, you owe there ...

"There's no salvation for you in Paris, friend.
You won't find such a job here

¹⁸ Petrovtsii's native village in Transcarpathia.

Where you don't do anything, but still get paid.
No one will protect you here from death.”

“I'm also a writer ... I write books ...”
“What? A writer? Don't make me laugh.
The Carpathians produced no writers in Soviet times,
Although some there cooked up a linguistic stew ...”

“Then what am I to do?” “Go home.
Write your own way. Speak your own way.
That's most important: do everything your own way.
Put wood, not straw, into the fire.

“If you think you're a teacher, then teach.
A writer—then write, whether with ink or with pencil.
It's not important how—just as long as it's your own,
And *for* your own. As the French do in France.

“We have our own beggars in Paris.
From my pedestal I see it all.
And now I see not only you,
I see your home in the Carpathians.

“It waits for you. Go home.
And at home earn your bloody kreutzer.¹⁹
So your children won't starve.
And fame? What good is fame?

“Rostov, Kirovohrad, Kamchatka, Komi,
Paris—they're all in the past for you.
A family man must live *at* home and *for* home.
So luck will turn her face to you.

“You were and are a Rusyn. And you will
Have a purely Rusnak nature.
For you there is no better land, and there can't be,
Than your native land—Subcarpathia.”



¹⁹ A small silver or copper coin used in Austria and Hungary.

Short Song on a Drunk's Paradise

Outside the window January passes,
 But in the house it's September, or May!
 Blue *slyvovits*²⁰—a gift from God—
 Here, let's pour!

I pour a glass full,
 We swallow! And a miracle occurs:
 The drunken head sinks,
 But the soul flies to heaven.

Just yesterday our life was hell,
 And now all around me, it's heaven.
 What burned me, what pained me—I've forgotten it all.
 Let's just pour!

Don't cheat—pour it in glassfuls.
 My soul has never been so high!
 Like the frame on an icon, in this paradise
 Yesterday's sorrow is baked in blood.



[From *Nashi y nynashi spivanký*. Reprinted in *Spivanký*.]

Mother's Words

For Ivan Popovych, friend and singer

When I was small, mother told me sternly:
 "Look at the Lord's crucifixion and don't forget—
 Man becomes God only
 When betrayed by Judases."

²⁰ Plum brandy.

[From *Poslīdni spūvankŷ*. Reprinted in *Spūvankŷ*.]

Song on Opening a Book

When I write this, I am still alive,
When you read this, I'm already dead.
This line of verse—may it be holy!
You do not see my timeworn face.

I was! But I did not think—I am!
And I did not guess that I will not be!
My face shone,
And my chest breathed deep,

My head spun with thoughts,
My heart pumped blood through my body.
And suddenly, only my soul is alive,
My body is dead, and gone ...

Difficult to believe.
Even my dust is no longer in sight!
But no matter how strange it may seem
I am alive in these words.

And these, my words, are Rusyn.
Holy, immortal, real,
You see them, read them—they exist,
And I exist. I live in them.



God is a Rusyn

God is a Rusyn,
He wears a *kleban*²¹

²¹ A hat worn by older men in Transcarpathia.

just like my *nianio*.²²

God is a Rusyn.
He is hairy and pale
just like my *dido*.²³

God is a Rusyn.
He has embraced my land with love
just like me.



God Loves

When my mother was alive,
She told me that God
Breathes out from the thurible
The sweet smoke of incense.

When the winter wind flings the snow,
And the frost crunches all round,
God warms his frozen hands
In aromatic flaming candles.

When in this damned world, the soul
Pours out a prayer, like pure blood,
God flies down from the sky
On the wings of our prayers.



²² Father.

²³ Grandfather.

Song on Emptiness

I commit sins,
Which even God cannot count.
I write poems,
Which no one reads.

I walk the path
That leads to hell from heaven.
I live a life
That even I do not need.



Song on the Last Anticipation

I will soon die.
I already see the teeth of Death:
her bony mouth
opened for me.

Between her and me
is a very short path.
It's good that Auntie Death
limps on her left foot.

Limping, she goes
noseless, eyeless, barefoot.
I no longer live:
I stretch out my fat neck
under her sharp scythe.



Song on Hopelessness

Life is empty and people are poor,
You cannot remember happiness or joy.
Days go by on crutches without a trace
Through the sorrowful Rusyn land.

I don't know good, I don't fear evil,
I can't even lift a finger.
All my soul is black as the devil,
And there is nothing left in the mug.

How will it be now, what to live for?
Body and soul are mute.
To get rich and drink it all up?!
Life is a prison, but the grave is dark.

Vasyl' Sochka

VASYL' SOCHKA (1922–2010) entered the University of Budapest during World War II, but he graduated from Uzhhorod State University in 1950. He has worked on the editorial staff of the newspaper *Zakarpats'ka Pravda*, as a bibliographer at the Transcarpathian Regional Library in Uzhhorod, and as section head of the Transcarpathian Institute for Teacher Refresher Courses.

Sochka entered Rusyn literature in 1940 with his Russian-language collection *Mountains and Fate (Gory i dolia)*, published under the pseudonym Vasiliï Borzhavin. Sochka's early poems demonstrated an interest in Rusyn ethnography, and he integrated folk customs and dialect in his Russian-language poems. He published rarely during the Soviet era; his next collection was *Songs of Verkovyna (Verkhovynskie napevy)* in 1960.

In the post-Communist era, Sochka became one of the leading figures of the Rusyn movement in Transcarpathia and he began to publish poetry in Rusyn. He published a book of Rusyn-language poems in 1996, *In the Valleys of the Beskyds (V Podbeskydnýkh dolynakh)* and a collection of essays and poems, *In the Village They Rang for Vespers (Zazvonyly v sieli na vychurniu)* in 1999. He has also written a biography of Rusyn writers, *Awakeners of the Subcarpathian Rusyns (Budyтели podkarpats'kých rusynov, 1995)*.

[From *Zazvonyly v sieli na vychurniu*]

September Fires²⁴

Up there,
on the autumn potato fields
little fires glow and cry in the mountains,
like lanterns on high posts,
like distant train whistles ...

They guard the night field,
keep away wild boars,
above the Borzhava,²⁵ on the Carpathian crags,
September fires, dear as the forest ...



November

Autumn is ending. Cold. Quiet.
The wind blows a twig at my ear.
Bare acacias cry without sound,
like the thoughts
of the Subcarpathian Rusyn ...
The Fatherland cries quietly, softly,
and dreams of hope and a crust of Bread.



²⁴ According to local custom, fires are lit in the mountain fields at night to protect the crops from animals.

²⁵ A river in Transcarpathia.

Living Birds

Living birds do not die away
in lovely gardens,
they live on the sweet fruit of pear trees.

But some flourish on the cliffs
of eagles,
on Kychera,²⁶ near eagles' nests ...

Chrysanthemums on a November
Sunday
in a cemetery
beautify our burial mound.



Willow

Above the brook
the willow feeds her buds
fresh juice.
To her tender branches,
yet unripe,
she offers little leaves.

The willow quivers,
and gladly hears
the bird's twitter.
The warm summer
brings her
a happy dream.

But in autumn

²⁶ A mountain peak in the eastern Carpathians.

comes rain
and heavy weather.
In autumn
above the willow
laughs an evil wind.

Little by little
above the brook
the willow's body molds.
The winter storm
strips naked
the poor willow.

Frost
and wind,
the snow will fall,
and the willow
silently
endures it all



Violin and Book

Toward evening even the sun wants to rest,
and deer
go to drink water,
and above the village the violin plays sweetly,
for the gypsy
 too has a gentle soul.
I also once played violin
in the student orchestra.
It was long ago,
 in my first semester.
But I exchanged the violin for a book
 of lyrics,
for my soul was happy then,
 and romantic.

Tamara Kercha

TAMARA KERCHA was born in 1944 in a Rusyn village near Mukachevo to a literary family. Her father was the poet Ivan Kercha (1914–51) and her brother is lexicographer Igor' Kercha. She graduated from the biology faculty of Uzhhorod University in 1967 and worked as a teacher. Her humorous writings and caricatures, with her own illustrations, have been published in Leningrad, Kiev, and Uzhhorod. Her first book of humorous miniatures and songs, *Potatoes with Pepper (Bobal'ky yz poprēm)*, appeared in 1997. In *Once upon a Time (Býlo tsy ne býlo)*, she develops the genre of the folk tale with a Rusyn coloration and in a Rusyn spirit.

[From *Býlo tsy ne býlo*]

How an Orphan Became a Gentleman

Once upon a time, under Franz Joseph,²⁷ people ate all they wanted, drank wine from barrels, and rode in carriages. Everyone was a gentleman, just like us.

There lived an orphan, Antonii. He was a hardy boy, like Milo of Croton,²⁸ except that the Dear Lord did not give him good sense. He didn't even know his own name; he called himself Tontii. People felt sorry for him. They gave him food to eat and rags to wear. The lone orphan lived in an ancient rickety house that was left to him by his parents.

One evening a great gentleman drove up to the house in a carriage. The coachman was his servant, a deaf boy. Whether the horses were exhausted or the coachman was unfit, the coach overturned and trapped the gentleman. The gentleman yelled at full voice. The coachman bustled about, not knowing what to do. At the shout, Tontii ran up, stood by, and watched. The gentleman noticed him and said:

“Help me, my dear boy. If you free me, you'll get a sack of ducats.”

Without much effort, Tontii uprighted the coach and helped the gentleman to stand.

They set off for the gentleman's manor. But the closer they got to his home, the more the gentleman regretted that he had promised the boy so much money. After all, the poor boy would be happy with a couple of kreutzers.

“Never mind,” he thought to himself. “I'll figure it out somehow.”

When they arrived, the gentleman told the servants to feed the orphan. He had the deaf servant-coachman locked in the cellar and ordered that he be whipped twenty-five lashes. Meanwhile, he went to the barn, filled a bag with acorns, tied it securely, and with them he paid Tontii.

Tontii turned toward home. He whistled as he walked through the forest. This was a fine thank-you: never in his life had he held even a kreutzer, and here he was—a full stomach and a sack of ducats on his back!

After a while he was stopped by a man who may have been a traveler or a beggar. The man started to question Tontii about where he was going and what he was carrying. The boy eagerly told him everything about the incident with the gentleman. The man only had to touch the bag and knew immedi-

²⁷ Franz Joseph (1830–1916) was Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, and King of Hungary and Croatia from 1848 until 1916.

²⁸ A Greek athlete who was the most renowned wrestler in antiquity. His name is proverbial for extraordinary strength.

ately that there were no ducats there, and that the gentleman had deceived the orphan. He asked Tontii why he wanted so much money.

“I want to build a house like the gentleman’s and get married,” answered the boy.

“Give me that bag and I will make sure that all your wishes are fulfilled,” the man proposed.

Tontii gave him the bag and went home empty handed.

The traveler went to the gentleman’s manor and asked to spend the night. The gentleman ordered his servants to set the dogs on the beggar. But instead of attacking the stranger, the dogs just whined and hid.

The astonished gentleman asked, “Who are you?”

“St. Peter,” answered the man.

“Anyone can say that.” The gentleman did not believe him, although doubts assailed him. “Well then, perform some kind of miracle.”

The traveler held the bag of acorns up to the gentleman.

“Aha, this sack is filled with ducats, and I will turn them into acorns,” he said and began to untie the sack.

When the gentleman heard this, he was frightened, because he recognized his sack. But he was sly and began to lie to St. Peter, saying that he didn’t want to fool Tontii, that it was the coachman who gave the orphan acorns instead of ducats. Then the gentleman took St. Peter and led him to the cellar where the deaf servant was locked up.

“Aha, you see,” he said, “I had him punished for tricking the poor orphan.”

“Good,” said St. Peter. “The coachman got what was coming to him, and you will get what’s coming to you. You will build a beautiful house for the orphan and marry your daughter to him.”

And with those words, he left quietly.

The gentleman became livid and ordered twenty-five more lashes for the innocent servant. But even that did not make him feel better and he began to run from the cellar to the next floor. Fine, he would somehow build a house for the stupid Tontii, but how could he let his daughter marry him? The whole world would laugh at him!

Running about the house, he tripped on the bag of acorns, which St. Peter had left in the entryway. The gentleman grabbed the bag and threw it outside.

“There, go to the devil, damn it all!” he swore.

The bag split open and the acorns flew around the estate. And then—a miracle!—beautiful oak trees grew up from them. By morning, in the place of the gentleman’s estate there was a young green oak grove. And his mansion was gone.

For a long time, people were afraid to set foot there. Then little by little, they got used to it, and one by one they began to walk in the oak grove and

pick up the ducats, which lay on the ground under the trees like acorns. In time, those who were the quickest had collected enough money to build themselves houses. The very first house was Tontii's. He had a house built exactly like the gentleman's. On the gentleman's property a village grew up. It was called Dubove.²⁹

Whether Tontii ever got married, we do not know. That will be told in another story.



About the Twins

Once upon a time, long before the Tatars and Mongols walked the Carpathians,³⁰ there was a sea in the Carpathian Mountains.

On the shore of the sea, there lived two sisters, twins, Antsia and Mar'ka. When they lived with their parents, they never argued, but from the time they got married, some kind of unclean force moved among them.

Antsia married a hard-working young man, and a handsome boy, Ivanko, was born to them. He was as strong as a superhero, and he never used his strength for sordid deeds. He grew up so virtuous that you could spread him on bread like butter.

Mar'ka married a handsome young man. But he was as lazy as could be. In time he took to haunting the tavern. They had a little boy, Vasyl'ko. Everything would have been fine, but the Dear Lord did not give him intelligence.

Little by little Mar'ka became evil and envious. She always complained about her bad luck and began to hate her sister. She was once as pretty as a rose, but now she had become ugly, sparks flashed from her eyes, gray shreds of hair stuck out from under her kerchief. She always carried a knotty walking stick. The neighbors took to frightening their children by telling them, "If you are bad, you will turn out like Auntie Mar'ka."

In time they began to call her a witch. But they did not know that she really had become a witch. Often at night she would hobble through the dark forest, collecting roots, grass, and mushrooms to cook up a witch's brew.

²⁹ A Rusyn village in the Transcarpathian oblast of western Ukraine. Its name is derived from the word for oak tree (*dub*).

³⁰ In the fifth and sixth centuries, various Asiatic nomadic peoples crossed into the Danubian Basin. According to Rusyn historical tradition, the Rusyns had their own independent state before the coming of another Asiatic tribe, the Magyars, at the end of the ninth century.

Once Ivanko went fishing. He drifted in a boat in the middle of the sea. He fished and fished and did not notice that it was getting dark. When he returned late at night, he heard some strange sounds. Though he did not want to, he turned in that direction.

He rowed to the shore and moored the boat. He walked as though bewitched. Auntie Mar'ka was practicing her witchery. She lured him to her house and poisoned him. Her husband was still in the tavern, and foolish Vasyl'ko was asleep. But when she was hiding Ivanko's body in a sack, Vasyl'ko woke up and witnessed his mother's crime.

Mar'ka got in Ivanko's boat, tied the sack to it, and rowed to the middle of the sea. When she pulled up the sack there, the boat overturned. Together with the sack, she sank to the very bottom.

All night Ivanko's parents were awake waiting for their child to return. Toward morning they caught sight of his boat rocking upside down on the waves.

His mother wrung her hands in grief. "Holy Virgin Mary, where is our Ivanko?"

And Mar'ka's Vasyl'ko answered:

"She hurled him there. *Tam ho verhla! Tam ho verhla!*" And he pointed his finger to the middle of the sea.

Ivanko's mother and father screamed with fright. They startled the animals in the forest and birds took wing high in the sky. Eagles circled above the sea, shrieking, "She hurled him here. *Tui ho verhla! Tui ho verhla!*"

Ivanko's parents turned to stone from grief. After a time, an unexpected storm blew up. For three days and three nights a terrible rain poured down. From the sky rained down stones, mud, and sand. In fear people hid where they could.

Only two people prayed on the shore—the priest Ivan and the deacon Petros, a pilgrim from faraway Greece. Someone had to accompany the dead on their distant path, even if the stars were to fall from the sky. And here the two found their final resting place. To this day the stone grave markers are called Mount Pop Ivan and Mount Petros.³¹

When the storm had ended, on the place where once a sea swelled with waves, now a mountain reached to the clouds. The old people, remembering Ivanko, looked to the highest mountain and said, "She hurled him there. *Tam ho verhla!*"

³¹ Pop Ivan (Ivan the priest) is the third highest mountain peak of the Chornohora range of the Carpathians in Transcarpathia, with a height of 6,634 feet above sea level. Mount Petros is 6,627 feet above sea level.

And this became the name of the mountain—*Hoverla*.³²

A bit further from the mountain, on the place where the sinner Mar'ka met her death, grew up a smaller mountain. They called it *Blyznytsia*, the Twin.³³

The sea dug itself a new trough underground. Because there was not enough air in these cramped conditions, all the sea life was gradually extinguished. Over long centuries, the water evaporated. The only memory of the sea that remained was petrified salt.

Miners at the Solotvyno salt mines³⁴ might tell you more about those years. They say that one ancient *dido* found in the salt a ring, which Ivanko's girlfriend had planned to give him. But that is another tale.

Hoverla stands and holds up the sky. And with this the tale of the twins is at an end.

³² Mount Hoverla is the highest peak of the Chornohora Range in the Eastern Carpathians. At 6,762 feet, it is the highest mountain in Ukraine.

³³ Blyznytsia refers to twin peaks in the Skydovets range of the Carpathians. The two peaks are 6,177 and 5,833 feet above sea level.

³⁴ Solotvyno is a village located in Transcarpathia near the Romanian border, famous for its salt mines. It was first mentioned in 1360, and its salt deposits have been known since the eighth century.

APPENDIX

Selected Original Texts, Sources, and Language Resources

Over its long history, Rusyn literature has been written in many languages, including various forms of uncodified Rusyn vernacular. As a minority without an ethnic state, Rusyns experienced political and economic problems that made it difficult to standardize their written language. No version of the Rusyn language was codified until the early twentieth century, when the Vojvodinian Rusyns were the first to achieve a literary standard and later enjoyed official recognition under Communist rule in Yugoslavia. Rusyns in other Communist countries were not as fortunate. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, they were administratively declared to be Ukrainian, their own language was proscribed, and they were compelled to use Ukrainian. It was not until after the fall of Communism that a Rusyn national revival took place, which resulted in concentrated attempts at the codification of a Rusyn literary standard.

In 1992 the First Congress of the Rusyn Language, attended by Rusyn and international scholars, was held in eastern Slovakia to plan the standardization of Rusyn. The Congress resolved to create three literary variants for the Prešov Region of Slovakia, the Transcarpathian Region of Ukraine, and the Lemko Region of Poland, based on local dialects. (The Vojvodinian Rusyn standard was established in 1923.) The participants agreed to meet periodically to exchange views on the progress in each region, as well as to coordinate their work toward the creation of a *koiné* that would serve as the basis for a single common Rusyn literary language.

In 2004, a book entitled *The Rusyn Language (Rusyn'skŷi iazyk)* was published in the fourteen-volume series called "A Modern History of Slavonic Languages," under the auspices of an international commission of Slavists. Each chapter of the book is devoted to an individual variant of Rusyn and is written in that variant of the language. The book's appearance in this prestigious series was an indication of the recognition of Rusyn by the international scholarly community.

Subsequent language congresses were held in 1999 and 2007 to deal with theoretical and practical issues, especially focusing on the status of Rusyn in

education and the development of a Rusyn *koiné*. The first proposal toward an inter-regional standard was the text *Narod nyvǎdký* (2007), a Rusyn-language translation of Paul Robert Magocsi's *The People from Nowhere* by Uzhhorod publisher Valerii Padiak.

For specific developments in each region and relevant linguistic resources, see below.

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UKRAINE

In Ukraine, Rusyns are not recognized by the state as a distinct people, and their language is officially considered a dialect of Ukrainian. This, along with the fragmentation of the Rusyn movement in Transcarpathia, has made codification difficult. Currently there are no fewer than three proposed standards. The first variant was created in 1992 and announced at the First Congress of the Rusyn Language. It was revised and published in 1999 as *Materyns'kyi iazyk (The Mother Tongue)*. In 2005 a dual language (Rusyn/English) book proposed a grammar based on a synthesis of local dialects. Finally, Valerii Padiak, the largest publisher of Rusyn-language books, uses his own norm in an attempt to move toward a Rusyn *koiné*.

The delay in standardizing the Rusyn language in Ukraine has led, in Valerii Padiak's words, to "linguistic anarchy." Writers, journalists, translators, and publishers rely on one of the proposed standards or on their native dialect for grammatical and spelling rules, and members of the older generation often refer to outdated norms. Authors have devised (and revised) their own grammatical and orthographic rules. For example, in 1996, Ivan Petrovtsii published *Nashi spivanky / Havi snivanki (Our Songs)*, but in 2006 he collected his previous books in *Spivanky / Snivanky (Songs)*, using a revised orthography that introduced the Latin letter *ü*. For a time, Vladymyr Fedynshynets' proposed replacing the jotted letters *я, ю, е, and u* with *ÿa, ÿy, ÿe, and ÿu*, before returning to a more traditional orthography. Sochka and other older writers, as well as the clerical author of the 2005 grammar, continue to use the *jat'* (ѣ). In some cases, writers are not consistent in their own usage, or they intermingle Russian or Ukrainian lexical items with Rusyn.

The last decade, however, has witnessed considerable progress. In 2004 a practical textbook for elementary grades of the private Rusyn Sunday schools was published (*Slovo za slovom / Word after Word*), along with a reader (*Zhyvoie slovo / The Living Word*). Drawing on all the dialects of Subcarpathian Rus' in a synthetic variant, these texts teach students the basics of grammar and spelling rules. There are also texts of history and literature for higher grades. Several small dictionaries exist, and in 2007, Igor' Kercha published a two-volume Rusyn-Russian dictionary containing over 58,000 words, which is the most thorough Rusyn dictionary to date.

It is expected that a Rusyn standard will emerge in Transcarpathia, as a single literary norm demonstrates its preeminence. Clearly, the language's

development is hampered by the limitations on its use. With no government support, Rusyn-language newspapers have appeared only irregularly in Transcarpathia, and Rusyn is heard on radio and television only in answers to interview questions, not as narration or reporting. Official recognition of the Rusyn nationality would entail the use of the Rusyn language in education and the media, which would hasten its standardization.

Владимир Федынышынець

Я кидь і вмру
І кидь душа моя людська по смерти
Перийде у штось иншоє,
Кажім, у ружу-косицю, —
То ружа-косиця тота
Стане руинськов.
І она послідньов зовйане
В осіннім городци
Перед самов зимов.
А кидь душа моя людська по смерти
Перийде, кажім у трепету, —
То дерево тото стане русинськым,
І оно высохне послідным у хащи,
Якое звезе відты коник-гуцулик.
А кидь душа моя людська по смерти
Перийде, кажім, у коника-гуцулика,
То коник тот стане русинськым.
І він упаде з копыт у зворі дись
Лише послідным ...
І стане добычов орла.
О, кидь душа моя людська по смерти
Перийде в орла-беркута,
То я вам гарантую,
Што не лише нияка гадина
Не спрячєся й під сыров зимльов, —
А й буду зорко сокотити
З вышины неба
Первинні границі Подкарпатської Руси.



Стихи—
 Се мій вірний ослик,
 На якому Карпатськов пустыньюв іду
 Та іду, та іду ...
 Де не родитися уже й вісу
 Чим го буду завтра годовати?



Материнський язык!
 Який він?!
 Быв колись,
 Є типирькы,
 Буде завтра-позавтрю?
 Боже,
 Кілько туйкы поламано копій-списів
 За двісто послідных годів!
 Обы не вразити рану,
 Обы не ятрити рану,
 Обы не одкрити рану,
 Обы загойити рану,—
 Я мечу іщи єден спис-копійо.
 ...Ци поповим у точку?

Fedŷnŷshŷnets' writes poetry in a modernist style, with puns, alliteration, sound and word play. Following are a few of his miniatures that are built on phonic and morphological innovation and resist translation into English.

I.

Єрусалем—лем рус є.

П.
Є рус а лем?—
(Єрусалем).
Лем рус е!



Быти русыном—
Быти русынам!
И нияк
Инак!
Бо—смирть!
Небытіє.



Етрускы—
Ето руські?
То єсть русины?
Тогды—
Гет руки
Від етрускив,
Украйнице й мацкалі!



Чути рояль.
Роятся пчолы.
Чола солоні.
Соло рояля.
(Лоно рояля).
Роятся чола.
Пчолы солоні ...



Соленое,
Олено,
Наше жытя.
Кажодневно
Перченое
І печеное ...
І —
Гикой залізо каленое.
Судьба крайова така.

Иван Петровцій

Курта бисіда из Наполеоном (excerpts)

Я русин быв и есьм. И буду
Натуру мати лем руснацьку.
Бывало я ходив на ламаня
В Ростовську область, ци—в Кіровограцьку.

.....

Союз урвався, врвалися гатары,
Та я свойых куфрїв ни вер из рук:
Я русин быв и есьм. И буде
Європа слухати мойых постолїв звук.

.....

Ид ньому йду ласкавий, ги тия,
Й, ги бїг приказав, кажу: —Славайсусу!
Я туйкы, чуєте, з Берегова прийшов ...
Та, перебачте ми, бо м прийти мусив ...

Туй тогу з себе звер Наполеон,
Протяг надо мнов руку: —Слава и навїкы!
У мене дниськы ниприйомный динь,

Айбо відіцького вже прийму чоловіка.

Я туй як гойкну: —Тко ты?! Поліглот!?
Што й по-руснацькы можеш говорити?! ...
—Вто знавуть всі: французы й русины
Народы у Європі май гоноровиті.

.....

Ты русин быв и єсь. И будеш
Натуру мати лем руснацьку.
Для тебе ліпшої зимлі ние й ни буде,
Ги рідна—підкарпатцька.



Бог—русин

Бог—русин,
бо має клібаню
таку, ги мій няньо.

Бог—русин,
бо пелехатый и блідый
такый, ги мій дідо.

Бог—русин,
бо край мій любовльов обняв
так, гикой я.



Співанка на удкрытя книги

Кой я йсе пишу—щи м живый.
Кой ты йсе читаш—вже вмерлый.
Сись шор стиха—ош бы сятый!...
Тобі не явить лик мій стерлый.

Я—быв! й не думав, ош я—є!
Та й ни гадав, ош я—ни буду! ...
Лице світилося моє,
И дыхали глубоко груди,

Думкы ройила голова,
Кров тілом серце розганяло ...
И—раз!—лише душа—жива ...
А тіло—вмерло, и—пропало ...

В сисе повіровати трудно—
Нигде ни видко вже й мій прах!
Та як бы вто ни было чудно:
Я єм живий—у сих словах!

А йсі слова мої—РУСИНСЬКІ!
Сяті, безсмертні наяву.
Ты видиш—читаєш їх!—инніськы!
И я—инніськы!— в них живу!

Василь Сочка

Септемброві огні

Там,
на крумльовых осінних полях
світят и плачут в горах огонькы—
як фонарѣ на високих стовбах,
як поѣздов оддаленнѣ гудкы ...

Поле ночное они сторожат,
дикых свиной одгоняют они,
по-над Боржавов, на слконах Карпат,
милѣ, як лѣс, септемброві огні ...

Новембер

Осѣнь кончае ся. Холодно. Глухо.
Прутником вітер ударив над ухом.
Голѣ акаціѣ плачут без шума,
як Подкарпатского Русина
думы ...
Плаче Отчизнина тихо и глухо,
снится надежда и Хлѣба краюха!

Тамара Керча

За близниць (excerpts)

Было ци не было, а задовго перед тым, як Карпатськыма горами ходили Татари з Монголами, было у Карпатах море.

Жили на бережкови сестры-близницї, Анця тай Марька. Докудь жили при родичох, нигда ся не вадили, а удколи ся поуддавали, перебігла межи нима якась нечиста сила.

Анця уддала ся за газдувного легіня. Уродив ся їм красный хлопчик, Иванко. Дужый був, ги дакый силак, айбо силу свою нигда не похусновав на пудлоє діло, бо такый ся удав благый, же го мож было на хлїб мастити.

И Марька пуйшла за файного легіня. Лем што лїнюх був, такого мало де найти. Из часом ши й до корчмы имив ся набыляти. Уродив ся у них хлопчик, Василько. Вшитко бы добрі, лем не дав му розуму богонько.

.....

Лем двоє молили ся на берегови. Были тото пуп Иван из дяком Петросом, завандрувником из далекой Греції. Кось мусит удпроводити покойных у неблизкий путь, хоть бы ай гвюздя з неба сыпало ся. Там и найшли тоты двоє свое послїдное пристанище. Камняні надгробкы до днись так ся кличут—гора Пуп Иван тай гора Петрос.

Коли было вже по бури, на тому містї, де колись море габовало, высила ся гора до хмар. Старі люде, згадувучи за Иванка, на майвысшу гору вказовали: “Там го вергла!”

Так ся и убстала туй горї назва—Говерла.

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SLOVAKIA

In the Prešov Region of Slovakia, work on codifying the Rusyn language began soon after the birth of the Rusyn movement. Rule-books, grammars, an orthographic dictionary, and a series of textbooks for Rusyn, based on the Zemplyn dialect, appeared in 1994. The following year, the codification of the Rusyn literary language was announced at an official ceremony in Bratislava, and since then Rusyn has been recognized as a minority language in Slovakia. As such, Rusyns have the right to use their language in local government administration, media, and education, but economic matters and other issues have hindered its expansion.

In the media, Rusyn is used in three published secular periodicals (*Rusyn* 1990–present; *Narodný novynký* 1991–present; *InfoRusyn* 2004–present). The first two played a dominant role in standardizing the Rusyn language in the years leading up to official codification. After years of struggle beginning in the 1990s, Slovak Radio (Rádio Patria) now transmits fourteen hours of Rusyn-language programming weekly. There is some Rusyn content in minority broadcasts on Slovak Television, but there are problems with the quality of linguistic expression both on television and radio.

The introduction of the Rusyn literary language into the school system began in 1996, and in 2004–2005, Rusyn language and literature was taught as a required subject in one elementary school and as an elective subject in nine others. Since 1999 a division of Rusyn Language and Culture at Prešov University has taught Rusyn on the university level, and in 2006 it was accredited to train teachers of Rusyn. In 2008, the division became an Institute of Rusyn Language and Culture, which also promotes scholarly research in Rusyn studies. The current director of the Institute, Anna Plíšková, completed a doctoral dissertation on the history and use of the Rusyn language in Slovakia at the Slavic Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. This was the first—and to date, the only—dissertation written entirely in the Rusyn language.

In 2005, a review of the 1994 norms was initiated by the language committee of the Department of Rusyn Language and Culture at the University of Prešov with input from speakers and readers of Rusyn. As a result, about thirty changes were made, resulting in a revised rule-book and orthographic dictionary. These changes are not reflected in the literary selections from Slovakia, which pre-date the most recent revisions.

Миколай Ксеняк

Дротарьскы черепкы (excerpts)

Дротарько, хто тебе спомяне в теперішній нагливости? І нач? Ведь ты корункы не множиш, а што днесь велё пінязей не приносить, є бідне і одшмарене до забытя.

Робиш собі, дротарько, заслугы, же єсь наших Русинів в Замагурю захранёвала од великой біды, же єсь од непамяти—уж в протітурецькых войнах цісаря Леополда Першого—першый грайцярик домів принесла. А ці памяташ мено першого дротаря? Де він повандровав? До котрой країны, через котры горы и потоки? В котрім році же то было?

Могла бы-сь, дротарько, ся хвалити, же єсь неопакуючій ся феномен, же єсь єдина на світі, бо твій кумшт познали лем руиньскы майстрове з Камюнкы, Орябины, Фольварку (Странян), Великого Липника, Литмановой и пару хлопів зо Сулина і Кремной, і тыж словеньскы майстрове з Великого Ровного, Тренчіна ... котры про цісаря Ёзефа Другого выготовили прекрасну колыску, а зато їм Марія Терезія доволили по цілім цісарстві дротарёвати. На ціленькім світі лем словеньскы і русиньскы майстрове познали твої тайны. Лем они єдины!

Но ты, дротарько, ся нам теперь цалком страчаш, бо одходять зо жывота твої майстрове, а з нима і ты. Така є гола правда: твої майстрове уж не мають наслідників. Уж ани твої стары співаны не чути по горах-долинах, ани твої вандровны ступляї в стежках не зістануть. Кедь уж їх ніт, та ходем споминкы іщі зістають живы наших дротарів, іщі живых майстрів, бо, може, і їх немилосердний час завтра спровадить з того світа.

Сивы наши дідове-майстрове, зачните оживлёвати пережыте, зачните споминати. Я слухам і записую, най ходем дахто перечітать і ...



Письма дротарям

Сьме мужу хвала пану богу здравы ту є велика зима коровкы слабо доять куркы ся цалком перестали нести чом старый уж три місяці ся не озываш што є з тобов єсь захворів жыеш іщі озви ся мі жегнать тя твоя жена

Маря

Штефан Сухый**Цегла із розвалин Краснобрідського монастиря**

З одного боку—червена
а з другого—задымлена огнями
і з одтиском долони
цеглярьовой руки.
Што на ній святе?
Тот слід руки робітної
без вказівного пальця.

Намісто крісталів
до кременцової вітрини
цеглу єм поставив.

**Апрільове рано**

Рано
у гаю коприв і буряну
узким гарлом
пе курочка воду
із черепка:
—А я тобі, пане любцю,
ізнесу яйчко
і пак курча
выведу із нього.
—Кукуруіку!
Як на світі
щастя много.

**Русинська бісида**

Махну на тя, як Бог на Карпаты ...
Де ся одты поділи Білы Хорваты?

Же наша голузка легка на віру?
Одышли, зотліли і охабили в історії діру.

У Берліні на Шіллерштрассе
несподівано по плечу
Павел Палащак ня клепнув:
—Та як, Руснаку, што ту робиш?
—А ты ся, чоловіче, одкы ту узяв?

(Боже мілий,
якый маленький тот світ білий
а свій язык, як дивный хліб души,
кедь ся в далекім драю
є кому сповісти.)

Моя пахнячко-єдиначко,
хто тебе важить згалтовати
і махнути на тебе,
як Бог на Карпаты?

В культурнім Берліні учув єм,
як ся чужіх геніїв сохы розтопляли,
тогда на Шіллерштрассе
якбы до нас
зеленой Карпат кровли понапущали.

Веце—нич. Амінь.
Упав мі з серьця камінь.



Добра наука

Я така, як наша баба.
Кедь мі дахто зле ізробить,
я ся щі засмію
і я не єм зла,
хоць ани не рада.



**Як Руснакы релаксують (excerpts)
(Сатірічна сценка)**

Представте собі, же вам летить понад наш русиньсьый валал даякый любезный ангел за хочьяким своїм храненцём і учує дагде долов таку немасну-несолену бісиду:

—Наша віра—Богу міла, ваша віра—як у воді діра.

—Як ты знаш? Чей єсь з ним телефоновав?

—Но видиш: поган все лем по поганьскы ...

А бісида щі ся далше продовжує, лемже ангел-хранитель скоро ніч з ней не розумить і ся му дале не хоче ани слухати. Споминають тоты двома і Божу силу, і віру а за тым ся не по братьскы гадають. На чім? Обидвома суть оболочены скоро еднако: у гумовых чижмах, старых ногавіцях і у героках ... Докінця ай мена мають еднакы. Єден ся пише Янко Соломяный а тот другый Соломон Іван. Акурат шапки на головах мають інакшы. Ці ай головы?

Думать ангел, піду ся попросити мілосердной души Алесандра Духновіча, бо ему тот русиньський край і люде у нім барз добрі знамы, та най повість, чом ту часто меджі людми така баламута.

Отець Духновіч одповідать му:

—Народ сей в Бескідовых горах жівуще, і незнамый был, і со скотами своїми бывающе, не многы землі дістав, но молоком пітающеся, і мясом по лісах скітался, і крадежбою, яко раброванієм упряжнялся, ібо той час іще на граніцях не было осторожности ... но они люди не учены, глупы ... і так прекрасныя слободы, єдине про неуміє, і глупость утратили. Русине Угорьскій ныні найпоследніший народ остали, і ныні іще в глупости, і невіжестві жыють.

....

—Найшастливійший буде тот день, хлопи, кедь ся вшыткы Руснакы стануть Словаками і католиками. Та люде будуть жыти в злагоді, то вам гварю я, окресный механик пожарной охраны. Но, неправда? Качмарю!?

—Про мене еднакы пінязі, ці од тых, або од тамтых. Што то віра і народность? Нодем будь голодный і засохнутый а іщі не маш коруны, та ани ты не нападе подумати на таке. Не бійте ся! Кебы на Україні вшыткого було і жебы нашы люде там ходили за роботов, такой каждый єден Руснак бы са писав за Українця. Але зато, же є ліпший жывот на Словеньску, та ся нашы люде пишуть за Словаків.

—Чом так?

—Так ся научіли брати хосен з властной головы. Не было ся кому за них застати, тай ...

—Тадь сьме колись ай Духновіча даякого мали! Тадь мы не Цигане!
—Оёй, ёй, ці ні! Даколи хыбаль щі гіршы.

Марія Мальцовска

Материна свічка (excerpts)

Ближыв ся Великдень, а тоты святкы я дуже любила. Роздумовала єм, што вшытко зроблю, як буду матери асітовати коло паскы, місити тісто, класти огонь до великого мурованого пеца, який буде ним бовчати уж од рана в четверь. У нас ся паскы пекли уж в Жовный четверь, у Святу пятніньку ниhto не хотів робити таку роботу. Як тісто, може не на єдну, але на дві паскы выкисне у великих тепшах, як ся огонь втихомирить, а лем углики будуть поблисковати в пецу, мати з них здойме верьбове прутя, перехрестить тісто, покладе тепшы на деревяну лопату—и шупс з нима до пеца! Потім возьме кочирьгу і шумно-красно одгорне вуглики дале од тепш, жебы тісто не згоріло. І так пасочки ся можуть печі. Мати час од часу попозерать на спідні дверьці, яка сітуація в пецу, зась поправить углики і—чекаме. Од пасок не мож одходити, як не мож ани двері отваряти, жебы тісто не дістало цуг. І наконец мати отварять дверьці пеца і кочирьгов присувать єдну паску на край, бере до рук дві цундры, выберать тепшу, кладе на бляху перед пец. Так зробить ай з другов тепшов. Охабить їх так начас, поky застынуть, потім їх кладе на стіл, кропить верх пасок водов, жебы помякли, і помалы, нашторцголови їх выберать на білый парток. Паскы ся вдали! Ани єдна не попраскала! Мати ся усмівать, тішить ся, як малый дїтвак з даякой облюбеной бавку. А я стою на тым пахнячїм чудом, слинкы ся мі збігають і дораз бы-м закусила до білого хліба.

—Не руш!—вгадне мої думкы мати і кывком руки мі назначить, абы-м одышла од стола. —Ші не є посвячена!

Покорно одйду од стола і мій погляд смутно ся розлучить з двома білыма кралёвнами, які будуть панувати над нами цілый Велкодный тыждень.

....

Поставиме ся, а од пточіны, што тече коло церькви, нас порядно продує, поky прийде священник. Жебы скоротити час, буду ся позерати довкола себе і обдивляти красу вышываных партят, плахет, різнобарвну

красу малеваних яїчок. Буде то паства про мої очі! Як кожного року, і теперь буду обдивляти выпараджены невісты, молоды дівчата, буду позерати на валальських хлопів, котры почливо будуть стояти коло церькви без шапок, без калапів. Тоты завісят, як все, на клинці на підстінці деревяной церьковкы з року 1600. А іщі буду раховати людей. Ци ся не зменшыв півкруг коло церькви, бо подля довжкы того пікругу буду знати, хто у валалі вмер, хто уж нігда не прийде паску святити. Буду ся тішыти, кедь там увиджу кожного єдного, як ай минулого року. Буду нещастлива, кедь дахто буде хыбити.

А ту задзвоняť дзвоны.

—Христос воскресє! —озве ся священник сытым голосом.

—Воістину воскресє! —одповідяť му валалчане і побожно ся перехрестяť. Довкола церькви піде процесія, святы образы будуть нести найкрасшы дівчата з валалу, в твари, як ягодкы. Казаня буде красне, задушєвне. Буде ся нести в дусі Воскрєсенія Христового. Стары бабкы сі будуть од радости втерати сызы, а я бду єдна з них. Не знати кїлько сторічны липы ся будуть німо призерати на живот коло них і славити Господа за то, же живот ся ту не заставив, але наберать нову дінаміку.

....

Блыжкыв ся конєць рока, надходжали нашы руськы святкы. Было то шестого януара. На одділіню пановало тихо. Нихто ня не заставлєвав. В ташці я несла дарункы—білы підколінкы, синю квітковану нічну сорочку, всякы лакотинкы—помаранчі, банані, а чудом ся мі подарило зогнати грозна і пару сачків цуреликів Бонпарі. В ташци єм несла мисочку з пирогами, голубками, сливчанков. Холем дашто із щєдровечернєй вечері. Під пазухов ся мі гомбала мала умєла ялічка, котру єм хотїла аж на місті припарадити. З тыма вшыткыма дарами я вступила до материной цімры.

—Мам, днесь Святыї вечур, —гварю єї.

Мати лежала в мірі, ани ся не кывала. Лем кедь єм зачала розбалєвати дарункы, парадити ялічку, котру єм поставила до склянкы од компоту, мати ся пробаторила і зачал принимати світ коло себе.

Посадила-м єї на постіль.

—А теперь ся будеме молити, —повіла-м. —Днесь є Святыї вечур. Отче наш, і же єсі..., —зачала-м і позєрала-м на матір. Видїла-м, як ся єї уста намагають, і наконєць прогварила:

—На небєсі, да святиться імя твоє ...

І продовжовала цілу молитву.

Я не дыхала. Чутя мі залляло мозог і сердце. Мати красно высловлєвала слова ...

На то зачала співати: “Колі ясна звізда з неба виходила ...

—... тогды Пречістая Діва Сына породила,” —придала-м ся ку матери, як і вшиткы жены на цімрі.

Ні, на тот момент не можу нігда забыти, як і на то, кедь ся матери позвідовала, як і стораз передтым, як ся пише, мати з грозьбов в голосі одповіла чисто, красно, зрозуміло:

—Та шо єсь, шалена? Ты не знаєш, як ся твоя мати пише? Тадь Анастазія Параскова, а мала-м сім дітей. Єдною мі вмерло в часі войны, а Юрко ся затопив в Острові на купалиску. А мої сусідкы—Маря, Наця, Анця ...

—Мамко!—лем тільки єм выкрикла і зачала ей обнимати. —Та вы уже бісідуете, як ся патриві! Мамко, золотенька моя!



Валерій Купка

і падають голубы
як сивы стріхы
на смерть подобны
сивы ангелы
ся цілюють
в тісным обятю
але їх очі
смотрим до порожня
потихы
жебы не покорчіти крыла
они сідають до гнізда
і веселять ся там до рана
і не дають спати
сусідам



твої руки
божый камінь
і божа молитва
і божа воля
смерть

жЫВот
 до чоГось неясного споены
 крыла ангела
 ганьба
 а што зробиш
 жывот є уж раз такый

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POLAND

Contemporary Lemko-Rusyn literature began to appear in the 1980s, when several poets published bilingual Lemko-Rusyn/Polish collections and Lemko organizations began to put out Lemko-language periodicals. As founding chief editor of the bimonthly magazine *Besida* (1989–present) and the annual *Lemkivskii calendar / richnyk* (1993–present), poet Petro Trokhanovskii had a significant influence on the standardization of the language.

The first classes in Lemko-Rusyn were offered in 1991, and within two years, a number of privately produced photocopied school texts were released by the Lemko Society and the Ruska Bursa Society. Later, through the 1990s, several professionally published texts and dictionaries were prepared for various levels of education.

A grammar of literary Lemko was published by Henryk Fontański and Myroslava Khomiak in 1999 (a second revised edition appeared in 2004), according to which the contemporary Lemko language was standardized. Since then, Lemko has had the status of an official minority language in Poland. In 2003 a Lemko-Rusyn primer was published, and as of 2004, the language was being taught in approximately twenty elementary and secondary schools. In 2001, a specialization in Lemko-Rusyn studies was established at the Pedagogical Academy for Higher Education (Akademia Pedagogiczna) in Krakow, headed by scholar and poet Olena Duts'-Faifer.

Since 2003, Radio Kermesz in Krakow broadcasts minimally in Lemko and Ukrainian (ten minutes every Saturday) in a program aimed at both Lemkos and Ukrainians. Polish television sometimes features Rusyns as part of the minority-focused program “U Siebie,” produced by Krakow Television (twenty minutes on Thursdays, 1989–present). However, Rusyn is heard only in songs or interviews, while narration is in Polish. Although all national minorities in Poland have a right to radio and television broadcasts in their own language, the dispersal of the Lemkos means that there is no centralized Lemko community, which makes Lemko-language broadcasting less feasible.

Петро Трохановский**Лемківський святий**

Хоцбыс рюк слово
хоцбыс дашто повів
як ти на імя
як давно ту стоїш
за кого ся молиш
ци тя дашто болит
ци ся тішыш даколи

Як жьдовин невірний
дош ти в очы плюе
сонце
тото само сонце
проміньом тя бичуе

І хоц єс святий
хоц ти дали митру
а небом над тобом
хмары женут вітры

**Humanitas**

Бескиде мій
як доля горбатий
як воля міцнійшых
скамянілий

Болит мя краса твоя
в наймиты взята
на експо світу выставлена
а нам
што ме ей вірно в серцях плекали
без вікы несли
до рівных дни
списами заставлена

Болит мя сердце Бескиде
Його битя
тобі
в книзі великій заказане
Імено їй
Humanitas



Бранденбургска Брама

В моім маленькым краю
фан не вішають
на монументах

В моім маленькым краю
далеко деси там
на Лемковині
до фан лем вітер
а монументом
горы сины

В моім маленькым краю
надії
не мають дивізій

Та до цна подібні
жыють
і вмерають



Дорога

Кед бым на псы зышов
быв бым архітектором

Лемком єм остав
зовут мя поетом

Володислав Грабан**Хвиля**

Дыск сонця
Розтяв хырбет гір
Тоне
Спокійным тіньом
В блакітнім убочы
Золотит ікон лістя
Вознесене в бучынах
Они безсильно
Падают в безмір снігу
Червенным дукатом
Кольоры несе
Гмельна каскада
Надія дітиньства
Тіні птахів
Значат
Далеке виджыня
Вдаріньом крыл
Одженут осени
Жебы незабыти
Вернути

**Стара жінка**

В сухій траві осени
стара жінка зберат грушкы
долоньом глаще золоты кулі
кладе
в діравы жытя хусты
Похылена як сиве дерево
палицьом сперта о землю
думат несьміло
про тепле літо
Стара жінка під грушком
в холоді осінного дня
находит квітя—спомины

з діравой хусты
дымит спопелена памят
протікат
минуле жытя



Білы кости зимы
находжу на верхах
знам
жебы жыти
треба гмерти

Павел Коробчак

Свитаня (excerpts)

Піднюс повікы знад книжкы. За выглядом освітленого яренівком корытаря глыбина чорности зачала ся ріжниціювати, гломлена през піл пофалюваном границьом—з початку лем менше чорном як решта, потім сивом і штотраз барже горіючом (як все ріжниця перша двигат ся з хаосу). Чым барже ясніла, тым грубша ся ставала, гором розливаюча ся на цілу верхню верству рам выглядю. Сподом зас чорніст не уступлювала, так што крайнебо вирізувало ся в форму гір. Головы гір горіли святым світлом...

Стефания Трохановска

Лем

розшмарены
люде
од всходу
по захід
без ниякой

причыны
серце
остало
в горах
душа
пішла
до скансену
лем
чуга остала
яко довід
вины



Блуканя

до Америки
іхали
за хлібом
на всхід
за ковбасом
за захід
мусіли
святой землі
не знали
доцінити
пропала
тымчасом



волкы
выют
по горах
ім ся барже
повело
остали



Олена Дуць-Файфер

Мій світ
то не чуже слово
то кавальчык простору
в абсолюті
молитва
за помершы душы
якы іщы тліют в землі
зелене світло
будучым вікам
вкоріненым
в архетыпний
образ жытя

**Ворожба**

На долони три свічки
Лял ся вечер
в полонін чорнявом
... ворожылам
на пут каменистий
катуляло ся
кожде
лемківске слово
... пішлам

**Автобіографія**

Шізофренія
ци лем я надвоє
моє
твоє
Чьі імена
в нас вписаны
де моя земля

а де тота што мя родила
кілко поколінь іщы мине
підомном
надомном
сохнут травы

ци то лем туга
ци надія

Михал Сандович

Професор (excerpts)

Михал лем зачал ходити до основной школы, а Петро был уж студентом медицины. Сміял ся зо старых, же вернули до той бідусі, до того тыраня і не годен был зрозуміти вітця, кед заедно повтарял—“но, та преці єм дома”. На похорон вітця, котрого привалило в лісі дерево, не приїхал. Бо за далеко, за дорого. Был товды в Америці на стипендії. Выслали го там з академії, бо з виріжніньом здобыл звання лікаря і— знатя— до партії ся записал. А Михал з матірю дале братали ся з лемківском бідом.

....

Было пізне суботне пополудне. Гнал непреписово по місті, зо скорістю шувні выжшом понад дозволону шистдесятку. Минул таблицю “Сосновец”. Сам не знал, яким способом нашол ся при церкви. Затримал авто. Ввошол до середины. Пред іконами горіли свічы, пахло кадилом. Зробил на собі знак креста і долучыл до клячаючых. Співал хор, а душа мякла: —*Покаянія отверзи ми двери Жизнодавче*. Был прекоаний, же тоту чудову мелодию до пісні написал славний композитор церковной музыки, Бортнянській—родом з Бортного, його найкрасшого в Бескыді села.



Павел Стефановскій

Любителям лемківской культуры
Ляло колиси

і ляло
на люди
лемківських
з роздертого неба
хмар
змовили ся
Лемкы
і полатали хмары
грубыма нитками
власной роботы
пастушом пісньом
поворотом
на свої загоны
будучности
під дах
рідного неба
не лем
для хліба
так треба

Теодор Кузяк

Малы Лемкы тверды головы (excerpts)

Было то давно, хыбаль за цисаря Франца Йозефа. В єден осінний вечер в корчмі Абрама сідили собі при столі дває кумове—Гаврило і Данько. Сідили собі, попивали палінку і нарікали на тяжкы часы.

—Знате што, куме?—гварит Данько—неє на тым світі справедливости. Вшытко што хлоп купує, єст барз дороге, а што продає—барз туне.

—Так, так, правду гварите, куме—признал Гаврило.

—Но, лем си подумайте—тягнул дале Данько—мам на продай теля. Быцьок, юж му три тыжні минуло. Но, крас теля, тлусте. Моя стара яйця му до молока била, жебы было красше, а гнес пришол Лейба—но, тот гандляр, і знате кельо мі давал? Три риньскы! Та то пілдармо, та то злодійство в білий ден. І не дал єм! Повіл єм му, же най ту здохне, а не дам за глупство.

—Є, та добрі сте зробили, куме, бо аж гріх так туньо дати—потвердил Гаврило і скричал до корчмаря:

—Ноле, Абрам—налій ішы по пілкватеркы!

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HUNGARY

The small Rusyn population of Hungary does not yet have a codified literary language. The Hungarian Slavist Gergely Benedek proposed a standard on the basis of the speech of the inhabitants in two villages, Komloshka (Komlóska) and Muchon´ (Múcsony), but no Rusyn-language organization has as yet adopted it. Rusyn organizations in Hungary are currently working with Rusyns in Transcarpathia to develop a common literary language.

Rusyn is taught in a few elementary schools, and although it is not taught on the university level, the Department of Ukrainian and Rusyn philology at the School of Higher Education in Nyíregyháza, established in 1992, promotes research and publishing in the field of Rusyn studies.

A monthly Rusyn-language magazine, *Rusyns´kŷi svit* (2003–present), published in Budapest, serves Rusyn readers not only in Hungary but also in the Subcarpathian region of Ukraine, where it is widely distributed. Hungary’s Rusyns also have regular programming on state radio.

Габрел Гаттінгер-Клебашко**Тіло і душа**

тіло ті зістане
все лем даяка
форма
лем душа може быти
про человека
норма

**Чісту воду до погара**

Духнович ня научів:
“Я Русин був, єм і буду”,
насыпме уж до погара
тоту чісту воду!

**Мамі**

(На 13. ян.)

Чорно на ня
 смотря небо,
провадить ня,
 што вчера было,
ранцы у твари,
 што єм рідкаво видів,
світло на твари,
 жебым не заблудив.



Отче наш

Дякую ті, Отче наш,
за хліб на каждый день,
радість мого серця
и покій могой душі.

Але мі, лем хыбить штоска,
Небесный Отче наш,
же не мам з того дость,
не звышить ся у швіті
про каждого моя радість.

Дай мі, Отче, твою віру,
твою ласку і радість
най то буде твій дарунок
за то, же терплю,
най не видить ніхто,
кілько ся за нього молю.

На плечах наш хрест волочу,
тот тяжкий, русинский хрест,
затятый глубоко до тіла ...
Та дай мі, Отче, радість,
а ку тому силу,
най го тримаю високо,
най нас твоє сонце пече.

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SERBIA AND CROATIA

In the Vojvodina region of the former Yugoslavia, the Rusyn language was standardized as early as 1923. Today, the literary language of the Rusyns living in Serbia and Croatia is known as Vojvodinian-Srem Rusyn, or South Slav Rusyn. It was modified in 1971 and 1974 in the rulebook and grammar of Mikola Kochish and has been developed in several grammars and dictionaries. Vojvodinian Rusyn has been analyzed as a microlanguage within the Slavic family. It shares alternating East Slavic (Carpatho-Rusyn) and West Slavic (East Slovak) characteristics.

For decades, Vojvodinian Rusyn has been used in a broad range of functions. There are several elementary schools and one *gymnasium* (in Ruski Kerestur) in which Rusyn is the language of instruction, and a Department of Rusyn Language and Literature has functioned at the University of Novi Sad since 1975. The language has flourished in a variety of media published in Novi Sad: a weekly newspaper *Ruske slovo* (1945–present), a children’s magazine *Zahradka* (1946–present), a monthly youth journal *MAK* (1972–present), and a quarterly literary journal *Shvetlosts* (1952–present), as well as a newsletter published in Ruski Kerestur (*Rusnak* 2004–present). There are also scientific, cultural, and ecclesiastical periodicals.

A press agency, Ruthenpress, subsidized by the government, was launched in 2006. Several radio stations feature regular Rusyn-language programming, and Television Novi Sad presents a few hours of programs in Rusyn each week.

The Rusyn community in Croatia publishes its own magazine, *Rusnakovo klaski / Klasje Rusnaka* (2004–present), in Petrovci. A Rusyn-language program is broadcast on Radio Vukovar, and Croatian Radio and Television include Rusyns occasionally in their weekly programs devoted to minorities.

SERBIA

Дюра Папгаргаї

И на остатку було слово

Слово мой дом. Мой лік. Моя каплічка
Цеплінка з котрей слунечко напава позни роки.
Моя кетишка, мой крижик, моя улічка—
вакцина за тогожемски отровни словни поки.

Слово мой гроб. Таштамент з котрим дзешка бивам.
Крипта за чолну бразду. Мой дзень и моя ноц.
З нім ше жегнам, з нім ше опивам, з нім ше змивам.
Упарто obleкам на себе його отровну моц.

Слово мой боль. Мой сон у котрим лем жедлярим.
Моя спреводзка, мой шпиталь, обераца хворота.
Мой зраднік и гунцут зоз котрим ше бетярим.
Мой тужитель, судия и моя найщирша порота.

Слово мой грих. Моя молитва и моя покута.
Торжество розума, краса чола, тілесна пиха.
Та кед ме препознаш у раншим шпиву когута—
то мойо оловне слово зо мну так упарто диха.



Путованє на юг

Кед одпугуем на юг
теди кед черешня били шлаєр на себе здзее
и пчолка ей ласкотліви пахняци венец найдзе,
охабце на самим верху єдну миндошу най там зрее.
Можебуц ю з южним витриком
мой цинь покрадзме обочкац зайдзе.

Кед одпугуем на юг
теди кед буйне зарно до меха прах свой точи

и кед сцернянка оддихне од терхи златей,
на верх єдного браделка заблішню мойо очи
лем же би джмуркли спрам белавого неба
же мой цинь, ина, стражар у чарней скорки хлеба.

Кед одпугуєм на юг
теки кед блузни напучнети розпашу буйни виніци
и кед чардаки под златну терху почню стукац,
най ми ше у очох лем єдна гиризда на хвильку зашвици
и шицки дозрети бобки од шмиху
на моім хмурним чолє почню пукац.

Кед одпугуєм на юг
теди кед били пахняци пуканки з неба
цалу заграду до кабата опашу,
знайце: то ме успал пах праве вицаганого хлеба
и ранша цеплота мацерового оченашу.

Кед раз одпугуєм на юг
два метери и дацо под самого себе
(завиши од змиреносци ашова и гробарового плеца)
охабце ми по концу ногох место за гніздочко
з найколяцейшого пруща, тельо кельо сом сам себе вимерал.
Можебуц даєдна говля до ньго дараз злєци.

Ша я ше з говлями так часто
на юг зберал.



Пакованє куфрех

Пакуєм шести куфер.
Пейц полни. На остатню дзирку закапчани.
У першим: кетишка з дзецинскей перинки
и образ розпяца спод мецериней греди.
У другим: гипс зоз зламаней руки
и оцов пиштоль зоз Одеси.
У трєцим: велька гиря
и празна клюка з висхнутей студзенки.

У штвартим (ледво сом го закапчал):
щицке мойо зазрацтво посцискане.
У пиятим (злати еден):
цепле кределко, зуноване.

Чи ше ми змесци до шестого
шицок твой ошмих?



Подла биография

Газдовске презвиско. Мено тварде пориско.
На плецох лем една шия.
За хрибтом чудни витриско,
а кажди крочай лутрия.
Кридри подпалька за огніско.
Подла биография.

Пасош оверени: гу цудзим лем наоколо.
У першим шоре ані стац.
Лем як танцюю можеш грац.
Од квеца: хижна хортензия.
Шлебодно лем самого себе вжац.
Подла биография.

Карта за почесц: мишом госцина.
Локец ми нігда не бул зашитни знак.
Мой найоштрейши напой маковина.
Мой хороскопски знак шкорпия.
Стих ми и армия и дідовшина.
Подла биография.

Наталія Дудаш**Буц у канади поет славянського языка**

у канади ми гварели
шицко ци то исте лєм
жимна то зато провiнция

ша гат витримаю
кед сом не предводник
а поет не професия
будзем пчола вредна
як брамушка з валалу газдиня

райб пейглай пресцерай
кед буц поет не професия
гоч поправдзе з каждой векни
лєм една скорка ше оддзера

але як є можебуц то
идеалне видумство
поетох з держави не виганяю
але их вера ані за своїх не тримаю

од пондзелку шором
шицку желеняву до гарчка
два три фалатки мяса
а пополадню кед ше бліщи
спод ренди каждая сушедна хижа
зацагнем ше до буджаку

на шлебоди велькосци
яворового лісца
не як други швет
будзем мала поетеса

препатрели очка
скленяни загради и предні облаки
опатраю ше у ніх
вивирки у скоку и белави птички
и нігдзе ані єдного преходніка

але цоже
нет перфектни нації

зато добре медзи паперами
гоч не кабадим же
и то пиха самолюбия
буц у канади поет
славянского языка

но як є заш лем пишем
на языку з хторого рошню
стебла за посцель
аж у забуцу
будуцих генерацийох

е чом сом лем
не виучела за тишліра
та було би хлеба
бо правда же нет идеални нації
але єст професії

и так назмарзана
до пиятку сом крочела
после очуханих очкох
шицких осигуруюцих заводах
банкох турных
и за биване скленяниих орманох
скруцела сом свойо папери
пречитала з довирийом
упутства на кухньових апаратох
и гу вибраному прискочела

назмарзана
до микрогабовей релни
сом ше счупела

кед ше одпочинем
у тей завартей шкатули
будзем права поетеса

Юлиан Тамаш**Хусточка**

Вежне ше фалат неба,
поля под житом з дзепоедним пипињом або некошни деп
и з оштрим ока реже еден фалат.
Руби ше зоз сцерпеньом любоморного джобнуца игли.
У игли найфинша цверна од слунка або дижджу.
Дагдзе ше шице закончує з гузлом шніговей пахульки;
теди ше вяже и власох радосни рики гаца.
Кед ше пипине место ганьби обера, хусточка ше зніма
же би мотилї з гамбох злетовали на карк и плеца.

У старосци не з хусточку—
з цмоту ше власох радосци рики гаца.

Агнета Бучко-Папаргаї**У оцових чижмох на дильове**

Учили ме подзековац
за дробни ствари.
Учили ме шніц
о дробніцох
и радовац ше квітнуцу.

И я дзековала
за кажде здравканє,
шніла розквітнуту овоц
и радовала ше пчоли
на квету.

Кед сом доросла,
гварели:
зоз дробніцами
лем дробни людзе задовольни.

Яка сом дробна
у оцових чижмох на дильове.

Ирина Гарди-Ковачевич**Слово**

Зачало космос
и народзело Бога.
Тропары шпивало
и пасторали,
страх задавало
печатоване.

За пустиньскима пастирами ходзело,
у колісанки росло,
на боїскох оставало,
на вичносьц опоминало.

Списане плацели млади глави,
бешедоване—
розпукнути стари шерца.
Плач дзецка даремни
кед го мацерово перши
не накарма.
Яловес и нашене человека
кед не виключка
у жени.

Зоз златом злацене,
зоз златом плацене—
шведочи о човекови.

Мария Якім**До сна вигната**

Сон мой други завичай;
резацы нож дня,
биле гарло,
може буц же
гарло
заколє шерцо ошивицених облакох.

Сон мой товариш завичай;
гу ньому ше врацам
кед даремно себе виженєм до швета.

Натлия Канюх

Врациц ше до празней хижи, нука ...

Ноц прешла мирно. Рано ше прихтало за диждж.
Штварток нешка, Вельки штварток, треци тидзень як не идзем робиц...
Як и векшина других.

Воздух мирни, бул би аж совершенно нерухоми лем кед би птички не
лсцели
зоз конарох на телефонски дроти, або вшадзи дзе ше им лем сце!
Добре им, можу кадзи сцу!

А я ше можем лем врациц до празней хижи, нука.
Але хижка можебуц ані не празна, остал у ней сон.

Любела бим кед би ше дзепоедни сни предлужели у тей хижи.
На поладне, пополадню, звечара, вноци...

Теди кед ше не зяви авион над городом.

У тим сну город не будзе зніщени, мости над рику буду цали.

И я будзем цала.

И шицки будземе змирени, запатерни до хмарох лем пре ярні диждж.
Ніч инше.

У тим сну шицки будземе жиц без страху.

Лем у тим сну и нігдзе вецей на тей жеми.

Владимир Гарянски**Кадзи же ше рушине**

кед же цель не шме буц звонка нас кадзи
же ше рушине мудра травко, можебуц витор
випове космичну цихосц през нашо крегке
цело. можебуц ноц укаже драгу своїм вистатим
путніком, можебуц слункова заря задзеє стрелку
свійм вирним паломніком. кадзи. кадзи же ше рушине
мудра травко после длугого патрєня до ока
шаблі. можебуц до хлопства. дзецинства.
мацеровей утробы. може цихей писні жеми.
оцови универзума або єдноставно
єдно гу другому о травко.

Звонимир Наряди**О пристносци писні**

Писня як рошлінка
рожне гу небу.
Корені пуца медзи гліну.
Можебуц до воды.
Така превидна,
як рошлінка крегка.
Розпята медзи седем шветами
вичекує шмерц гевтого
цо ю виписує.
Можеш ю вецка зоз тисяч очми читац.
Пречитац ю не мушиш.
Вона ше будзе кармиц
зоз тайну постояня.
Побочка небо праве у хвилькох
кед вериц престанеш
до ей прсутносци.

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CROATIA

Любка Сегеди-Фалц

Єшень умера

Умера нешка розкошна єшень
мертва и писня цверчка у трави
лєм ше у здогадованю моім
небо и мирне морйо белави.

Знємри ше цихосц у мнє
кед шуци лісце жовте и боль болї
кед витор ше нємирни бави
з голим конарком у тополї.

Остатнї лісток витор ноши
сциха го кладзе на мертву траву,
слухам, як дижджик сциха роши
и тащок уж под кридло скрива главу.

Єшень през поля празни блука
дзе ше недавно житко гойсало.
Писню шкорванчка орач нє слуха.
Шицко цо радосне було долетло, лебо поспало.

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Carpatho-Rusyn literature, which dates back to the sixteenth century, emerged as a distinct creative movement only after the revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe, where the ancestral Rusyn homeland straddles the borders of five countries: Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. For much of the twentieth century, however, Rusyns did not officially exist, since Soviet-dominated governments stubbornly denied the existence of any such ethnicity or language. Only the former Yugoslavia recognized a small community of Rusyns, descendants of immigrants from the Carpathian region to the Vojvodina.

Shortly before the fall of Communist rule, however, it became clear that Rusyns had not disappeared, and since that time a Rusyn cultural renaissance has been underway. As the language was standardized, writers who had previously used Ukrainian, Slovak, or Polish now applied their talent and expertise to rejuvenating a Rusyn national literature in several variants of the Rusyn language. Not surprisingly, one of the most important thematic concerns is Rusyn identity—its history, survival into the present, and its preservation for the future.

Collected here, for the first time in English translation, is a representative sampling of contemporary Rusyn poetry and prose by twenty-seven authors from six countries. An introduction surveys Rusyn literary history, and an appendix provides selected texts from each country in the original Rusyn, as well as an extensive bibliography of language resources.

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