

Natan Dubovitsky - An Imitation of Homer [based on a post-true story]

Epigraphs

Ye Gods, your dealings now injurious seem
And cruel. [...] your pleasure is alone
To please Achilles, that pernicious chief,
Who neither right regards, nor owns a mind
That can relent, but as the lion, urged
By his own dauntless heart and savage force,
Invades without remorse the rights of man
Homer - The Iliad

Over the Cossack his mother cries.
Don't weep, mother, dry your eyes!
For your son has wed a wife,
The fairest young girl of his life.
Gogol - A Terrible Vengeance

The first idol, eyeless and made of foreign stone
The second one, made of wood domestic and beast-faced
Which one of them will you feed me to
Oh my beloved empire?
RashaOnMars - Tweets

On The Grass

Grass. The grass I'm lying on. The grass I'm lying on smells of dust. The grass I'm lying on smells of dust, diesel and something else. Maybe my blood.

I don't feel any pain. Can't move - the body doesn't hear the cries of the soul. Doesn't react, doesn't move. But it's there, and it must be in a lot of pain, but it's as if I'm not in it. As if shifted by a micron, I'm unable to match up with it.

Is that it? Seems so. Sh... So, I'll never know what'll happen to me next. Because there won't be a me anymore. My dreams won't come true. And, good riddance, maybe. After all, everything I dream about and what I really want is publicly reprehensible and criminally punishable. Nothing good would have come from it anyway. From this life. From this life, which is mine, which is about to disappear.

Ridiculous. But how else? Is it even possible to take all this garbage around you seriously? You can only play it. Now the game is over and - lost. But the question isn't whether you win or lose. You'll lose, of course. The question is how exactly. I did my best. Put up a good fight. Played the guitar, played Hamlet, played cards, played war. And now I'm here, lying. Consider my posture a very deep bow. To all of you, dear viewers.

Would I have fallen otherwise, backwards, then I'd be lying on my back, like Prince Andrew, and looking at the sky. But the explosion pushed me forward, face down, and instead of the Austerlitz sky the dusty Donetsk grass fills my eyes.

Tref and Stern

Tref and Stern entered without reporting, and even lighting their pungent non-electronic cigarettes as they

entered. Commander Fraiser grimaced; he was enraged by the unstatutory behavior of the old-timers. He almost managed to exterminate all these presumptuous tendencies in the ranks of the militia, to which the soldiers became accustomed to during the first, most horrific and unbridled months of the war, when field commanders did not obey anyone and fought with each other no less than with the enemy. But some of the most famous and respected heroes, such as Tref and Stern, retained some privileges. For example, to break in on the boss like that. And to address him as "you". Fraiser endured, patiently, at the same time gradually, without transgressing, without inciting a mutiny, increasing the distance between them and himself. He knew that by the new year he'd have everyone behaving like everyone else.

Actually, he himself was one of those, primordial and legendary, but his thinking was somehow unfree, square. And if someone stood out from the rest, he'd beat out everything outstanding out of him without hesitation, sometimes losing the most useful qualities, just so that he wouldn't stand out and disrupt the formation. That's why, in the Center they chose him and placed him above all the, once equal, commanders. Out of the merry partisan rabble, he made a gloomy, invincible army. On all fronts, he won boring undeniable victories. His battles were lacking in grandeur. He was not loved by his soldiers. His enemies were not afraid of him. But his soldiers defeated his enemies.

"What d'you want?" - asked Fraiser and looked at the steppe. At night, a rocket flew in from the steppe and exploded a floor below. The outer wall of the office collapsed, and a beautiful view opened up: villages, tents, and lurking near the station, flocks of tanks. On the right stood a large blackened spoil tip, on the left a gentle eastern wind was blowing, a lone peregrine falcon gliding on it at ease.

"You know what" responded Tref. Fraiser noticed that Tref's awards had increased since yesterday: some kind of dirty yellow medal protruded from under a mysterious eight-pointed star somewhere on his stomach. His chest has long been completely covered with all kinds of selfmade crosses, medals, stars that Tref made from anything that glitters - from cans, old coins, copper wire. He developed the designs and came up with the names and statutes himself. Those that turned out better, he awarded himself. The rest he handed over for merits and distinctions to whom he wanted. He reasonably believed that you won't be awarded any orders from the authorities in such a war so you'll have to settle that yourself somehow.

"No beer?" said Fraiser.

"Still joking, still fu**ing around" hissed Stern, approaching Fraiser. - "Come on, let's cut out the jokes already."

"Let's" Fraiser turned to Stern with a quick K.O. look. Stern recoiled.

"You know what... commander, you eh... need to rescue Minus." - His speech changed to a different tone.\