

NIKOLAI KLIUEV—PROPHET OF LOSS

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The life, work, and reception of Nikolai Kliuev (1884–1937) provide striking illustrations of the intense preoccupation in Russian culture with the association between poetry and prophecy, between poet and prophet. Kliuev's work abounds in prophetic statements of many kinds, while he frequently and self-consciously positioned himself as a "prophet" and explicitly identified his work as "prophetic." Moreover, the circumstances of his disappearance from and then re-appearance within the Russian literary pantheon have strengthened, posthumously, his claim to a prophetic role. In particular, the timing of his reappearance—in the period of *glasnost'* and *perestroika*, as his homeland was enduring yet another period of radical reshaping, leading to the dramatic disintegration of many of its social, political, and cultural institutions—invited readings of Kliuev and his work which emphasized, after the fact, the poet's ability to foretell the tragic fate of twentieth-century Russia, anticipated and apparently predicted in much of his writing.

What is foregrounded and what is ignored in the presentation (and self-presentation) of Kliuev the prophet demonstrate important paradigms for the interaction with poetry of the social, political, and cultural during and after the Modernist period in Russia, while the attention paid today to Kliuev the prophet emphasizes the continuing fascination with the vatic role of poet and poetry, even in the post-Soviet environment.

As is abundantly obvious, Russian literature and Russian popular culture have frequently been preoccupied with various kinds of prophetic discourse and prophets. The early twentieth century was especially rich in prophetic texts and figures, while Russia today also manifests a clear interest in all kinds of "prophecy."¹ Since prophetic discourse is generally taken to be powerful, distinct, but obscure and in need of interpretation, and since prophets are ascribed a special, often cultic, status, although that status may be disputed and may even bring with it considerable risk to their own persons, it is hardly surprising to find that poetry and prophecy encounter one another frequently in Russia. Often the model of "prophet" is employed to authorize the superior status of the poet and his/her discourse (it is explicit, for example, in

a key text—Pushkin’s “Prorok” [The Prophet, 1826]; but it is not restricted to poets—as the reception of the late Dostoevsky demonstrates). The use of “prophetic” themes and language to legitimize programmatic, often apocalyptic or millenarian, descriptions of the present is common, especially in Modernism. Blok’s “Skify” [Scythians, 1918] is an obvious example to cite here, not least because its theme and title link it to the “Scythian” program of Ivanov-Razumnik, with which Kliuev himself was associated. The insertion into poetic texts of statements claiming to foretell the future is equally noteworthy—for instance, Khlebnikov’s works abound in such statements, and the poet pursued other “prophetic” interests (see Moeller-Sally). Moreover, the interpretation of poetic texts as statements that do indeed foretell the future remains very widespread, as may not only be illustrated by the popular custom of fortune-telling using a favorite book of verse, but also demonstrated by a brief search of the Russian Internet—the last name of any major poet plus the word *prorochestvo* [prophecy] will summon hundreds, often thousands of “hits.”²

Each of these associations is made frequently in the case of Kliuev. His paradoxical status simultaneously as both a “peasant poet,” born and brought up in northern villages, and a fully-fledged Russian Modernist (and therefore participant in a highly exclusive area of elite cultural production) made the role of prophet particularly significant and convenient, since it authorized movement between “high” and “popular” culture. Meanwhile, readings of his verse are likely to make (consciously or unconsciously) equally diverse interpretive gestures—both towards “authentic” popular culture and towards the dense and often learned textual practices of Modernism. That the role of prophet had particular resonance in the Modernist period in general needs little rehearsal—the example of Grigory Rasputin should serve as adequate testimony to the fact. Indeed, the comparison of Kliuev to Rasputin was widespread, and the Siberian seer appears several times in Kliuev’s own work—“Menia Rasputinym nazvali” [I have been called Rasputin] (Kliuev 1999, 353, 894) begins a famous lyric. Moreover, the prophetic role, like the claims of affiliation to the Old Belief or to religious sectarianism frequently made by Kliuev, forms part of an elaborate and unstable synthetic identity shaped by and for the poet in the context of Modernism, and reshaped in the Soviet period. The complexities of that identity are illustrated not only by Kliuev’s status as Modernist peasant poet, but also by the equally paradoxical combination in his life and work of programmatic cultural archaism and homosexuality. This paradoxical synthetic identity rendered Kliuev a self-conscious outsider in almost any social and cultural context, and, effectively, guaranteed that Stalinist persecution would add another marked category to his life story: that of martyr.

For those willing to accept Kliuev’s self-presentation, the prophetic element provided further confirmation of his exceptional status: “Khristos sredi

nas” [Christ among us], in the words of Blok to Gorodetsky’s wife (Kliuev 2003b, 31, 42, 93, 95; Kliuev 2003a, 63). Yet, for others, the poet was an elegant and clever fraud—as in the famous portrait by Georgy Ivanov in his *Peterburgskie zimy* [Petersburg Winters], quoted by Khodasevich in his *Nekropol’* [Necropolis], suggested by Olga Forsh in her *Sumasshedshii korabl’* [Ship of Fools], and rendered in vulgar, primitive terms by the poet’s Stalinist persecutors and their successors (G. Ivanov 333–34; Khodasevich 186–92; Forsh 208–14).

Kliuev was born and brought up in villages near the small town of Vytegra, at the southeastern end of Lake Onega. While still living in this region he began his literary career, writing his first poems and initiating his correspondence with Aleksandr Blok.³ That correspondence, *inter alia*, led him to the literary world of St. Petersburg, where he was prominent in Modernist circles in the 1910s. But from late 1917 until 1923 he lived in Vytegra. During this Vytegra period Kliuev, who had initially welcomed Bolshevism, was a very active participant in local affairs, writing for the local papers; there, too, he wrote a large number of lyric poems and what most readers would see as the first of his *poemy* [narrative poems]. He then moved to Leningrad, where he remained a very productive author, but found himself increasingly (and predictably) at odds with the official literary climate. Moving on to Moscow at the end of the 1920s, he continued to write (but did not publish his work). He was arrested in 1934 and exiled to Siberia, where, after further arrests, he was executed in 1937.

Even in his earliest poetry, the prophetic claims and motifs are obvious. For example, among the works he sent to Blok in a letter of late 1908 are poems which clearly demonstrate such interests (Kliuev 2003a, 165–81). “Plovets” [The Swimmer] (Kliuev 1999, 107–8) opens with the lines “V stranu prorokov i tsarei / Ia cheln izmuchennoi napravil [Into the land of prophets and kings / I directed the exhausted barque].”⁴ Another poem sent to Blok opens with a quotation from the Book of Revelation:

Я был в духе в день воскресный,
Осененный высотой,
Просветленно-бестелесный
И младенчески простой. (Kliuev 1999, 110)

I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day,
Overshadowed by elevation,
Lucidly bodiless
And childishy simple.

At a relatively early stage in his career, he was repeatedly labeled a poet-prophet, most significantly during his association with the Golgotha Christians group, an association which produced his *bratskie pesni* [fraternal songs] in 1912. Valentin Svetsitsky, in his tendentious introduction to Kliuev’s larger edition of *Bratskie pesni*, applied the term to the poet and his poetry, in a conjuncture, typical for the period, of the social, the religio-mystical, and the popular (Svetsitskii v. vi, x, xiv), while Gumilev, in his “Pis’ma o russkoi poezii” [Letters on Russian poetry], saw *Bratskie pesni* as confirming that Kliuev was a “foreteller [*provozvestnik*] of a new force, of popular

[*narodnaia*] culture” (Gumilev 4: 299). In these examples, the idea of the prophet is clearly a specific product of Russian Modernism’s social interests. Later, the image of the prophet and prophetic motifs themselves acquire more varied interpretations in the poet’s work. Prophetic elements are especially notable in the poetry written in the last years of the First World War, in the early years of Bolshevism, and in the last years of the poet’s life—that is, during the most dramatic and chaotic periods of Russian history in the poet’s lifetime. The density of prophetic motifs in Kliuev’s work from these periods is illustrated clearly in the following examples.

The lengthy “*Poddonnyi psalom*” [Psalm from the depths] (Kliuev 1999, 288–92) of 1916 opens “*Chto napishu i chto reku, o Gosposdi!* [What shall I write and what shall I say, O Lord!],” only to reject the written for the spoken (and popular) embodied by the poet-prophet himself:

О душа моя—чудище поддонное,
Стоглавое, многохвостое, тысячепудовое,
Прозри и виждь: свет брезжит!..

O my soul—wonder from the depths,
Hundred-headed, many-tailed, ten-ton,
Look and see: light breaks!....

The visions described are a programmatic mixture of the religious, the social, and the aesthetic, with allusions to the Old and New Testaments, Russian pagan mythology, and the Church Slavonic alphabet. The speaker, assigning himself a messianic role, proclaims that “*pir muzhitskii sviat i miren* [the peasant feast is sacred and peaceful],” in what seems to be a popular version of the Second Coming.

In the concluding poem of Kliuev’s greatest collection *L’vinyi khleb* [Lion’s bread, 1922], “*Pole, useiannoe kostiami*” [A field sown with bones, 1920] (Kliuev 1999, 472), the speaker’s vision is of bleak catastrophe, apparently linked to modernity: over the field of bones passes “*gremiashchii makhovikami, / Bezymiannyi i bezlikii kto-to* [clattering flywheels, / A nameless, faceless someone].” Nonetheless—in a characteristic reversal—poem and vision conclude with a surprisingly optimistic insight: “*I Bog zeleneet pobegom vetlovym / Pod novoiu tverd’iu, nad krasnoi zemlei* [And God becomes verdant in sprouting willows / Beneath a new firmament, above a red land].” Equally characteristic is the poem’s final ambiguity—is the land red from spilt blood, or red from its new political configuration (in which, equally characteristically, Christian and pagan apparently blend unproblematically)?

Representative of the late poetry’s prophetic tone is the cycle “*Razrukha*” [Destruction, 1934], consisting of three lyrics, “*Pesnia Gamaiuna*,” “*Ot Lacheozera do Vyga*,” and “*Est’ demony chumy, prokazy i kholery*” [The song of Gamaiun; From Lake Lache to Vyg; There are demons of plague, leprosy, and cholera] (Kliuev 1999, 624–31, 764–65). “*Pesnia Gamaiuna*” introduces the major themes of the cycle: the arrival of ill-omened news; the loss of traditional Russia, and destruction of hearth and home; the present as plague; a catalogue of disasters tied to places expressive of the physical and cultural geog-

raphy of the Russian empire; the destruction of the Russian north. “Ot Lachezera do Vyga,” the most complex and elusive of the three poems, charts a metaphorical journey across that physical and cultural geography, encountering past and present, documented and visionary horrors. “Est’ demony chumy, prokazy i kholery” links its catalogue of plagues to a lament for Russian towns and rivers afflicted by the present, and concludes with an elaborate description of Stalinist Moscow. The pronouncements of the prophetic, mythological bird Gamaiun in the opening poem set the tone for the cycle:

«К нам вести горькие пришли,
Что зыбь Арала в мертвой тине,
Что редки аисты на Украине,
Моздокские не звонки ковыли,
И в светлой Саровской пустыне
Скрипят подземные рули!

К нам тучи вести занесли,
Что Волга синяя мелеет,
И жгут по Керженцу злоден
Зеленохвойные кремля,
Что нивы суздальские, тля,
Родят лишайник да комли![...]

Нам вести душу обожгли,
Что больше нет родной земли,
Что зыбь Арала в мертвой тине,
Замолк Грицько на Украине,
И Север—лебедь ледяной—
Истек бездомною волной,
Оповещая корабли,
Что больше нет родной земли!»

“Bitter news has reached us:
That the Aral Sea’s waves lie in dead slime,
That storks are rare in the Ukraine,
The Mozdok steppe grasses no longer ring,
And in the bright Sarov hermitage
Underground wheels screech!

The clouds have carried us news:
That the blue Volga is becoming shallow,
That evil men along the Kerzhenets
Burn the green-needled fortresses,
That the meadows of Suzdal’ rot and
Give birth to lichen and tree stumps![...]

The news has seared our souls:
That the home land is no more,
That the Aral Sea’s waves lie in dead slime,
That in the Ukraine Gritsko is silent,
And the North—a frozen swan—
Has bled away in a homeless wave,
Informing ships
That the home land is no more!”

Prophetic notes are, however, sometimes struck in the most unexpected places. Among his Vytegra works is a lyric addressed to Anna Kirillova, wife of the poet Vladimir Kirillov (himself the addressee of Kliuev’s intriguing two-poem cycle of 1918/19 (Kliuev 1999, 396–99). The poem to Anna Kirillova begins on a clearly prophetic note:

Эта девушка умрет в родах...
Невдогад болезной повитухе,
Что он был давяще-яр в плечах
И с пушком на отроческом брюхе,

Что тяжел и сочен был приплод—
Бурелом средь яблонь белоцветных...
(Kliuev 1999, 380).

This girl will die in labor...
The kindly midwife couldn’t guess,
That he was gigantic at the shoulders
And had fluffy hair on an adolescent belly.

That the unborn child was heavy and full—
A wind-downed trunk among the white-
blossomed apple trees...

Characteristically, the poem turns away from this startling opening to predict a bright afterlife for the heroine, and concludes:

Эту девушку, душистую, как соты,
Приголубит радужный Христос.

This girl, fragrant like a bee hive,
Will be welcomed by a rainbow Christ.

Kliuev, as this poem reveals, could even write personal addresses as a prophet. A year after the composition of that work, the local paper, *Zvezda Vytegra* [Star of Vytegra], published selections from the verse of Esenin, Shiriaevets, Kirillov, and Kliuev, accompanied by brief, anonymous, introductory notes. Kliuev was characterized as follows:

A *clairvoyant* poet of the people, fixing upon himself the astonished attention of all of his great contemporaries.

The son of Olonian forests, who has struck Russian literature with verbal thunder. Workers and peasants' power did not fail to honor the Red Bard, publishing his writings alongside the immortal works of Lev Tolstoy, Gogol, and others. (Kliuev 2003b, 153; emphasis added).

Scholarship has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the author of this brief editorial commentary was none other than the poet described—Nikolai Kliuev himself (Subbotin 141–42, 144–45).

As these examples illustrate, Kliuev was much preoccupied with the association between prophecy (and such related phenomena as omens, foresight, visions, and so on) and poetry. Prophetic motifs are frequently found in an expressly apocalyptic context, although by no means infrequently the prophecy itself is utopian (and the utopias are diverse). As the anonymous Vytegra publication illustrates, the poet is sometimes presented explicitly as “seer” or prophet; at other times specific and individual prophetic remarks are made in verse (see the poem to Anna Kirillova); at times these two elements are combined, as so strikingly in his very last known poem, “Est’ dve strany: odna—Bol’nitsa” [There are two countries—one the Hospital] (Kliuev 1999, 632), anticipating his death (which came, however, in October, not April, as the poem prophesied). Frequently the poetry of the last two decades of his life also predicts millenarian events which will lead, albeit sometimes through bloodshed and destruction, to the utopian rebirth of society (as in “Pole useiannoe kostiami”); often both lyric and narrative poetry describe apocalyptic scenes, combining the realities of the present with apparent future disasters (as in the “Pesnia Gamaiuna”); on occasions, the coming apocalypse is anticipated by signs of danger or ill health—such and similar omens are often important episodes in his extensive narrative poetry (written between the early 1920s and the beginning of his Siberian exile). Prophetic visions, seen either by the poet himself or by his mother, are also significant episodes in autobiographical verse and prose, while some letters describe visionary episodes anticipating the future. Last, but by no means least, a dozen or so of the poet’s dreams were recorded by companions and friends during the 1920s, and many are quite clearly prophetic in language, imagery, and content.

To this list should be added the testimony of the poet’s contemporaries—for example, Roman Mensky, writing about the composition of Kliuev’s famous polemical lyric “Kto za chto, a ia za dvoperst’ e” [Men may support what they wish, but I am for making the sign of the cross with two fingers, written 1928] (Kliuev 1999, 541), says that the poet, in words of farewell after a 1929 meet-

ing, “said several times, almost in a whisper, ‘There will be burning... Oh, there will be burning’” (Menskii 1953, 151; Kliuev 1999, 945).

The only more or less authoritative edition of Kliuev’s verse to date (*Serdtshe edinoroga*, 1999) includes 510 poems it classifies as lyrics. Of these, according to a cursory survey, 63 may be termed “prophetic” in whole or part, using the very broad categories enumerated above. That same edition classifies nine works as *poemy* (a tenth has been published in fragmentary form, and an eleventh is known to exist, but remains unpublished; it should also be noted that the distinction between *poema* and lyric is by no means clear in Kliuev’s work, and editors disagree on designations). Of the nine *poemy* in *Serdtshe edinoroga*, six contain “prophetic” elements—as does the fragmentary *poema Kain* [Cain, 1929], not included in this edition. Of course, the categories applied are broad, and “prophecy” exists within a continuum where not only divination, omens, apocalyptic and millenarian visions are to be found, but also phenomena related to religion (established and popular, orthodox and sectarian), and, in a number of cases, even broader issues of sexual, national, and even supranational identity. Nonetheless, the level of prophetic saturation is striking.

Kliuev’s sources of prophetic discourse and models for it are predictable: the prophets, major and minor, of the Old Testament (several are quoted, others are mentioned in his work); that favorite text for Russian culture, the Revelation of St. John the Divine, which concludes the New Testament, and which has encouraged so much apocalyptic speculation and imagery among Russian writers, old and new; popular omens and divination. Entirely absent are the models of ancient prophecy encountered throughout Greek and Roman literature (to which Kliuev, despite his eclecticism and evidently wide reading, makes very little reference of any kind). The general cultural background of Modernism is evident, but in a combination, typical of the mature Kliuev, with Old Russian literature, popular tradition, a rather generalized Orientalism (Muslim seers and divines appear in his poetry, for example), and a wide range of exemplars of the Russian religious world—from established orthodoxy to sectarianism and “neo-pagan” practices. Models drawn from the classics of golden-age Russian literature are also encountered.

The diversity of categories and sources in the poet’s use of prophetic and similar motifs is easily illustrated. Natural omens, for example, are common. In particular, birds associated with divination and prophecy abound, especially the loon or diver [*gagara*], the cuckoo, the crow and other *corvidae* (as well, of course, as the mythological Gamaiun, whose song concludes the cycle “Razrukha”). Kliuev’s most extended and intriguing “constructed autobiography” is entitled “Gagar’ia sud’bina” [The loon’s fate] (Kliuev 2003b, 31–42), and contains a number of prophetic motifs—such as his youthful visions and later contact with the prophet-leader of a sectarian group. Agricultural motifs are also to be found, as in this poem of 1917/1918, which opens:

Се знамение: багряная корова,
Скотица с подойником пламенным,—
Будет кринка тяжко-свинцова,
Устойка с творогом каменным.

(Kliuev 1999, 372–73)

Behold the sign: a scarlet cow
The milkmaid with a flaming pail,—
The pitcher will be leaden heavy,
The cream full of stone curds.

Another work of the same period is characteristic in its prophetic vision of the union of local specifics both with the exotic and with the high-cultural:

Стада носорогов в глухом Заонежье,
Бизонный телок в ярославском хлеву...
Я вижу деревни седые, медвежьи,
Где Скрябин расставил силки на молву.

(Kliuev 1999, 404)

Herds of rhinoceri in farthest Trans-Onega,
A bison calf in a Yaroslavl barn...
I see villages, gray and obscure,
Where Scriabin set snares for talk.

In Kliuev's second-longest narrative work, *Pogorel'shchina* of 1928 [The Burnt Ruins] (Kliuev 1999, 670–95), Pronia, the village lacemaker, has a prophetic dream, anticipating the destruction of her village Sigovets or Sigovoi Lob [Whitefish Forehead]—the burned ruins of the title:

Приснился Проне смертный сон:
Сиговец змием полонен,
И нет подойника, ушата,
Где б не гвездились змеята.

(Kliuev 1999, 680)

Pronia dreamt a fatal dream:
Sigovets captured by a dragon,
And nowhere a pail or tub
Without a nest of dragon young.

In a related episode within *Pogorel'shchina*, Nil, the local hermit (“Nil stolpnik” [Nil the Stylite]), ascends to the heavens—his departure exemplary of Russia abandoned by its saints and holy men, a recurrent motif in Kliuev's later work. Immediately before Nil's ascension, he sends a bird with a warning prophecy to the villagers. The message is blunt indeed: *prepare for death* (Kliuev 1999, 682).

Kliuev's *magnum opus*, the long-lost *Pesn' o Velikoi Materi*, discovered in the KGB archives and published from this incomplete copy during the *glasnost'* period (Kliuev 1999, 701–816), abounds with dreams and other signs, interpreted by diverse characters: by Parasha, the mother of the hero; by a shaman; by an orthodox priest; by the hero himself (one Nikolai Kliuev, sharing some but not all of his biography with the author of the text); and by others. In an episode that is revealed at its end to have been an extended prophetic dream of the young hero, a multinational gathering of seers takes place. Their musings on the apocalyptic consequences of industrialization are concluded by the song of Gamaiun, which, as was noted, also forms part of the cycle “Razrukha” (such textual instabilities as this multiple use of the same poem are typical of Kliuev, especially in his last, “pre-Gutenberg” period). Late in this massive poem the mature hero has a prophetic vision about the last Emperor.

Among Kliuev's allusions to the image of the poet as prophet in *belles lettres*, the most striking and obvious is, predictably, to Pushkin. At least twice

he embeds in his poetry allusions to Pushkin's "Prorok" [The Prophet]. At the end of the last poem of the "Razrukha" cycle, "Est' demony chumy, prokazy i kholyery" [There are demons of plague, leprosy, and cholera], the speaker asks a question which is a barely encoded allusion to "Prorok," with its image of a fiery coal inserted by a six-winged seraph into the poet/prophet's body. Kliuev's speaker asks:

Но кто целящей головней	But who with a healing fiery log
Спалит бетонные отеки... (Kliuev 1999, 631)	Will burn off the concrete swellings...

Pushkin's poet and prophet, violently reconstructed by the seraph, is famously told in the final lines of "Prorok" to walk across seas and lands and to burn with his words the hearts of men ["Glagolom zhgi serdtsa luidei"]. Kliuev domesticates the fiery coal, transforming it to a burning log, and renders contemporary his own previous images of plague, asking who will burn off the *concrete* swellings of flesh, but the shallow-buried allusion to Pushkin also—and most tellingly—provides an intermediate genealogical point between ancient prophecy and "Razrukha," and between the popular image of wandering seer and the high-cultural model of an ancient visionary in the position of the lyrical speaker.

Equally characteristic is the context of the other reference to Pushkin's "Prorok"—the first part of the fragmentary *Kain*, on which Kliuev worked in 1929. The *poema*, as published, is divided into four parts, of which only the fourth appears complete (Kuniaevs 204–29).⁵ In the first, very fragmentary, part, the speaker describes an October vision in which a diabolical figure tells him, the "zhguchii otrysk Avvakuma [fiery issue of Avvakum]," that he is "ognem slovesnym opalen [singed with the fire of words]," but that nothing can be done without the friendship of Cain. The expression clearly emulates the language and imagery of Pushkin. Allusions to the fallen sites of Russian spirituality—Radonezh, Sarov, Diveevo—follow, and then a sinister picture of Stalinist Russia. It might be noted that Part IV, the only complete section of the poem, not only provides, in all probability, a more or less reliable model for the preceding parts in its almost seamless combination of past and present and of the personal (lyrical recollections of the speaker's pastoral youth) and the general (history and fate of Russia), but is also—not least in this combination—highly characteristic of Kliuev's "prophetic" work as a whole. The lyrical recollections include memories of early (homosexual) love, while the history and fate of Russia is presented in a blending of pagan and Christian elements. The bloody present is interwoven not only with the Arcadian past, but also—and typically—with a somewhat ambiguous resurrection. Nature and culture are run together (Christ has appeared to the "loon backwaters," and the trees watch in astonishment this "second Baptism" of Russia); medieval elements, both pagan and Christian, emphasize the antiquity of the scene, while the context is apparently modern (if not simply timeless in its apocalyptic blending of peri-

ods); the concluding scene offers a disorienting mixture of pagan and Christian deities (some of them simultaneously pagan *and* Christian), in what seems to be the Second Coming, accompanied, as the author's prose note states, by the singing of the opening of the wedding hymn [*venchal'nyi Irmos*], "Holy martyrs, who have well beautified the church with your blood." It is also entirely characteristic that, as Eduard Meksh observes in the only substantial scholarly treatment of this poem, there is no such hymn (1995, 11).

Prophetic discourse and thematics, broadly defined, are, then, abundant, but diverse in their realization in Kliuev's poetry, and often constructed of highly eclectic elements. Frequency studies confirm the significance of both themes and discourse. While, according to the frequency dictionary of his verse compiled by Liudmila Iatskevich and her research group at Vologda University, the root of the word *prorok* is not a very prominent part of Kliuev's poetic vocabulary, the root of *veshchii* occurs forty-five times in Kliuev's poetry, making it the one-hundred-and-sixteenth most commonly used root in Kliuev's poetic vocabulary ("Spisok" 110). Indeed, the poet declares famously "On zhiv, Olonetskii *vedun*" [He is alive, the *seer* of Olonia, emphasis added], when describing himself in the late poem "Po zhizni raduites' so mnoi" [Rejoice with me through life] (Kliuev 1999, 592).

As with the appropriation of Old Believer and sectarian forms, histories, and identities, there is a strong polemic element in Kliuev's employment of prophetic discourse—not least in the reiterated apocalyptic descriptions of the destruction of rural Russia, its cultural and moral values. There is also a very strong assertion of individual identity in many of Kliuev's allusions to himself as prophet, seer, visionary, and so on (as seen in his self-characterizations quoted above). Indeed, prophetic discourse and the model of prophet-as-poet provide Kliuev with at least a partial and local resolution of what might be seen as one of the most pressing issues confronted by the generations of Russian Modernism from Blok to Pasternak: the relationship between a highly individualized, essentially lyrical "I," and a mobile, disruptive, even chaotic social history which the poet feels or finds himself obliged to chart.

Prophecy also offers a very significant formal model for Kliuev's works in general, just as the image of prophet provides a model for Kliuev the poet. Prophetic texts are likely to be discontinuous, fragmentary, and inconsistent, while much of Kliuev's poetry is marked by formal and thematic discontinuity. Moreover, his work in general is characterized by foregrounded hybridity, both formal and genetic, which provides another good match with the prophetic.

Even his dreams (recorded as the apparently immediate recollection of what was seen in sleep, but, at the same time, very obviously "literary") provide a typically hybrid form, and they, too, are open to interpretation as prophecy. Thus, even the most apparently primitive of Kliuev's prophetic texts illustrate a complex cultural and literary genealogy—products of a uni-

versal Russian preoccupation with prophetic dreams (Wigzell 11–45, 169–72, 175–78), yet literary works entirely characteristic of Kliuev’s own specific poetics. In the dream “Mertvaia golova” [Dead Head, 1922], as recorded by Kliuev’s one-time companion and amanuensis Nikolai Arkhipov, the narrator and protagonist is lost in a market where people-who-are-not-people, with canine eyes, are trading, and from which he knows there is no way back:

Stalls with meat began to appear. On the counters were sausages from human guts, and on the hooks along the walls human arms, legs, and torsos. In these market rows human flesh was being traded. I had only one way to go, through the brown mud and the dog-infested air. (Kliuev 2003b, 82)

As the dream continues, the protagonist finds himself bargaining for parts of the body of Arkhipov, while a walking (military) corpse takes an interest in the dead head. The dream, full of foreboding like so many of the poet’s recorded dreams, can easily be read as anticipating the bloody events of Stalinism, during which Arkhipov himself was arrested and imprisoned (Kliuev 2003b, 488). However, it must be noted that the dream proved inaccurate in its specifics: Arkhipov was rehabilitated in 1956 and died only in 1967. More telling, perhaps, than the dream and its recording is the fact that it was published many years later, and attracted commentary (for example, Mikhailov).

Kliuev remained true to his prophetic role even under extreme duress. As is now well known, the poet was arrested in Moscow in 1934, interrogated and convicted of two crimes (one the usual political crime, according to the 58th statute, the other homosexuality—a less widely discussed conviction). He was sent to exile in Siberia, at first to Kolpashev (now Kolpashevo), near Narym. (Incidentally, that last toponym occurs at least six times in Kliuev’s verse, most tellingly and prophetically in a poem of 1932, when the speaker asks of the lover-addressee “v kakom Naryme / Naidet on deda... [In what Narym / He’ll find the old man]” (Kliuev 1999, 612–13). After several months in Kolpashev, Kliuev was allowed to move to Tomsk, some two hundred kilometers to the south, and a much larger city. There he was to be arrested twice in 1937, the second arrest followed by a perfunctory interrogation, then execution and, presumably, burial in a mass grave. At the time of Kliuev’s 1934 Moscow arrest his interrogators seized the drafts of *Kain*, “Razrukha,” and *Pesn’ o Velikoi Materi*, and it is as appendages to his Moscow KGB file that these texts survived, to be published in and after the last years of Soviet power, as were the transcripts of his interrogation in Moscow, and his final interrogation in Tomsk. In his Moscow interrogation Kliuev is recorded as having glossed “Razrukha” as follows: “the policy of industrialization is destroying the foundation and beauty of Russian national [*narodnaia*] life, moreover that destruction is accompanied by the suffering and death of millions of Russians” (Kliuev 1989, 10).⁶ In other words, *in extremis* the poet insisted on the absolute authenticity of his prophetic vision.

His return to Tomsk from Kolpashev occasioned even more intriguing responses, also in the most trying of conditions. His letters provide two correspondents with radically different accounts. Immediately after his arrival, on October 12, 1934, he wrote to Varvara Gorbacheva, the wife of the poet Klychkov:

Dear Varvara Nikolaevna, it is a shame that I sent you a long letter, as I have been transferred to the city of Tomsk, they say it is a big favor, but once again I am without a corner of my own and without a crust of bread. For a place to sleep, I knocked at the first door I came to: "For the love of Christ." The place turned out to be filled by a whole family, a mad son in the corner, he cannot control his bodily functions, tortured. Lord! What will become of me? Every drop of blood weeps... Help with whatever you can. Farewell. (Kliuev 2003b, 340)

On October 24, however, he described his first night in Tomsk to another correspondent, Nadezhda Khristoforova-Sadomova as follows:

Right at the Feast of the Protection of the Holy Virgin I was transferred from Kolpashev to the city of Tomsk, a thousand versts closer to Moscow. Such a transfer must be considered a favor and leniency, but, as I left the steamer on a nasty and cold morning, I found myself for the second time in my exile without a corner of my own and without a crust of bread. I set off despondently along the unbelievably dirty streets of Tomsk. Here and there I sat down, sometimes on a bench at some entrance, sometimes on some step or other. Wet through, hungry and cold, when it was already getting dark, I knocked at the first door of a crooked-sided old building in the remote outskirts of the city—hoping to be able to beg lodgings for the love of Christ. To my astonishment, I was met by a pale, middle-aged man with curly hair and beard—and with the greeting, "Providence has sent us a guest! Come in, take your coat off, you must be tired." At these words, the man, with a smile, started taking off my coat, brought me a chair, knelt down and took off my boots, which were covered in thick mud. Then he brought me felt boots, bedding and a pillow, and quickly set up a place for me to sleep in a corner of the room. I thanked him, scarcely containing my tears, undressed and lay down—as the master of the house, without inquiring about anything, asked just one thing of me—to relax, lie down, and fall asleep. When I opened my eyes, it was already morning, a little samovar was boiling on the table, and there was black bread on a wooden plate... Over tea the man told me the following: "There came to me a beautiful, stately woman in Old-Believer attire, in a white head scarf worn down to her eyebrows: 'Take in my sufferer,' she asked me, 'I will pay you for him,' and she offered me gold." Dear Nadezhda Fedorovna, you must understand my tears and that condition, in which every drop of a man's blood weeps within him. She who gave me birth is watching over me. (Kliuev 2003b, 340–41)

Kliuev then describes another miraculous event which occurred in the home of his benefactor (an exiled church deacon): the unexpected discovery of a five-ruble golden coin hidden in a patch on his bag.

The difference between the two accounts is striking. One writer suggests that the second was written in an attempt to "comfort and calm" Kliuev's correspondent, but since his letters to Khristoforova-Sadomova are of an exceptionally confessional nature, and since all of Kliuev's correspondence from Siberia tends to emphasize rather than to elide his hardships, this explanation seems unlikely (Pichurin 22). Rather, a comparison of the two pieces suggests that the immediate impressions of his arrival in Tomsk, as relayed to Gor-

bacheva, had undergone a transformation into a more appropriate form for a Kliuev narrative by the time of the letter to Khristoforova-Sadomova (written when the poet had already found permanent lodgings). An integral part of that narrative is the prophetic dream in which his future host sees the poet's late mother (herself frequently presented in life as endowed with foresight, in Kliuev's accounts of his provenance). Indeed, many of his Siberian letters testify to Kliuev's maintenance of a complex literary identity, including his prophetic role. In the first months of his exile he explicitly identifies once again his poetry as prophetic: from Kolpashev in 1934 he wrote to Klychkov, appealing for help: "Think, my dear friend, how you might help my muse, whose *prophetic* eyes have been brutally put out" (Kliuev 2003b, 314, emphasis added). As has been noted, his last known poem, "Est' dve strany: odna—Bol'nitsa..." probably written in 1937, contains several prophetic elements, including visions of his own shroud, and, apparently, of his own afterlife:

...Блуждая пасмурной опушкой, Я обронил свою клюку, И заунывно кукушкой Стучусь в окно к гробовщику:	...Wandering in the shadowy glade, I dropped my walking stick, And like a dreary cuckoo Knock at the gravedigger's window:
...Но слыша скрежет ткацких кросен, Тянусь к зловещему окну. И вижу: тетушка Могила Ткет желтый саван, и челнок, Мелькая птицей чернокрылой, Рождает ткань, как мерность строк.	...But, hearing the rattle of a weaver's loom, I lean towards the sinister window. And see: old aunt Tomb Weaving a yellow shroud, and the shuttle, Flashing like a black-winged bird, Gives birth to fabric, like the rhythm of verse.
В вершинах пляска ветродуев, Под хрип волчицной трубы Читаю нити: «Н. А. Клюев,— Певец Олонецкой избы!» Я умер! Господи, ужели?! Но где же койка добрый врач? И слышу: «В розовом апреле Оборван твой предсмертный плач!...	In the heights above dance the winds, To the wheezing of the she-wolf chimney I read the words sewn in the shroud: "N. A. Kliuev, The singer of the Olonian peasant house!" I've died? Lord, surely not?! But where's the sick bed, good doctor? And I hear, "In rosy April Your last lamentation was cut off!...
«Приди, дитя мое, приди!»— Запела лютня неземная, И сердце птичкой из груди Перепорхнуло в кущи рая.	"Come, my child, come!" Sang the unearthly lute, And my heart sprang like a bird From my chest into the groves of heaven.
...И ангел вторил: «Буди, буди! Благословен родной овсень! Его, как розыны в сосуде, Блюдет Христос на Оный День!»	...And the angel answered, "Be it so, be it so! Blessed is the native rite of spring! It, like roses in the vessel, Is watched by Christ for Judgment Day!"

Thus prophecy and related phenomena contribute to the diversity and synthesis characteristic of Kliuev's *œuvre* and biography. The arcane, esoteric knowledge and the elevated cultural and moral position of the poet are emphasized, even by texts which are on the margins of the literary (the dreams

and letters). These texts also invite the reader to participate in the esoteric, to become part of a very particular created readership (or audience, since some of these texts were actually only *heard* during the poet's lifetime), which further legitimizes the authority of the author, while apparently generating a kind of mystical association between author and auditor or reader.

That all of these texts and motifs are, *inter alia*, a description of and response to times of extraordinary upheaval, in which the apocalyptic did indeed seem to be almost everyday, hardly needs to be stated. They exemplify the literalization of cultural motifs inherited from Modernism, which is characteristic of the Soviet period in general: what was figurative and related to *fin-de-siècle* European culture in general, could become, in the context of mass bloodshed and upheaval, literal. However, it does need to be pointed out that at least one of the starting points for Kliuev's apocalyptic thematics is surely the *positive* millenarian treatment of the Bolshevik coup and the anticipated attendant circumstances which characterize, albeit often in highly ambiguous contexts, much of his verse of the early revolutionary period. For example, the utopian vision of rhinoceri in the Trans-Onega region quoted above is from a poem which forms part of the Lenin cycle, where the proletarian leader is praised and is compared with Kliuev's Old-Believer heroes, and where the coming Soviet state is seen as essentially millenarian. Kliuev's view that Bolshevism initially reciprocated his enthusiasm is equally well attested—for example, by the anonymous note cited above (where Kliuev is the Red Bard, honored by the workers' and peasants' power). Thus his path from enthusiastic revolutionary to prophet of destruction—far from unique among his contemporaries—helps to explain not only the despair but also the tone of penitence often encountered in autobiographical passages in the later poetry (including, most notably, *Kain* and *Pesn' o Velikoi Materi*).

Both his later prophecies and his later penitence have been given especial emphasis in publications of and on the poet in recent years. In order to consider that aspect of Kliuev's reception today it is important also to examine the chronology of the poet's verse, a chronology that, like so many in twentieth-century Russia, is far from linear. Kliuev was able to publish very little indeed after the mid-1920s, although he read his verse quite actively and copies of some unpublished works circulated widely (in particular *Pogorel'shchina*, a copy of which the poet arranged to export to Italy). Only after his death, and in the West, did his later poetry find its way into print, most notably in the 1969 edition, *Sochineniia*. Examples of the late Kliuev published there (mostly from drafts) certainly found their way back into Russia, but when Kliuev was published again in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s, after some thirty years of almost total silence, it was hesitatingly, very selectively, and largely without the late and ideologically problematic lyrics. With *glasnost'*, all the work previously published only abroad returned home, but the major Kliuev publications of this period were entirely new, and, for the most part, newly dis-

covered. Until the journalist and author Vitaly Shentalinsky gained access to the KGB archive for a brief period in the late 1980s, no one suspected that even a draft of *Pesn' o Velikoi Materi* had survived, and no one had any inkling of the existence of the cycle “Razrukha” or the fragmentary *Kain*. Other, essentially entirely new texts also came to light, including many letters, the “dream texts,” and a good number of lyrics.

In other words, in the very vaults of the murderous enemy and in other places hidden even from that enemy, fragments and remnants of the martyred poet’s literary testament were discovered, at the very moment that the enemy state was collapsing. And among those fragments and remnants were many that contained visionary accounts of the apocalyptic nature of the present and of the future—the latter now, it could be argued, fully realized. Not surprisingly, words such as *veshchii* and *prorok* were as common among Kliuev’s critical readers as they were in the texts themselves (perhaps even more so). Shentalinsky’s publication of extracts from Kliuev’s interrogation and of the cycle “Razrukha” in *Ogonek* was entitled “Gamaiun—ptitsa veshchaia” [Gamaiun is a prophetic bird]. In it, Shentalinsky calls Kliuev’s writing “a fearful prognostication,” “prophetic” [*groznoe predskazanie, veshchee*] (Kliuev 1989, 10), and in his book he identifies these late poems as prophesying: the ecological problems of the Aral Sea; the Soviet government’s plans for redirecting the great rivers of Siberia; the creation of the nuclear weapons research center at Arzamas 16 (near St. Serafim’s Sarov); the bloodshed in Nagorno-Karabakh; and the Chernobyl disaster (Kliuev 1989, 202). When Shentalinsky’s commentary appeared in English it was entitled “The Case of Nikolai Klyuev, Prophet.” For Liudmila Kalinina, writing in 1997, Kliuev is a “sage of the people from a remote corner of the country”; “by essence of character and fate Kliuev was predestined to become a prophet” (Kalinina, 210–11). And more learned commentators are not without the same inclination—Eduard Meksh is the author of an article entitled “‘Nispala polynnaia zvezda’ (prorochestvo Nikolaia Kliueva)” [‘There fell the star wormwood’ (Nikolai Kliuev’s prophecy)], and A. P. Kazarkin entitles his interpretive essay on *Pesn' o Velikoi Materi* “Apokaliptika Nikolaia Kliueva” [The apocalyptic vision of Nikolai Kliuev]. Aleksandr Mikhailov, one of Kliuev’s most assiduous and effective commentators, not only acknowledges the prophetic quality of the poet’s dreams (Mikhailov 163–64), as does Tatiana Ponomareva in her book on the poet’s prose (Ponomareva 113), but also, in his introduction to the most complete edition of Kliuev’s poetry, manages to interpret one poem as predicting the birth in a peasant house of the first man in space, Yuri Gagarin (Kliuev 1989, 29). For Nikolai Pereiaslov, Kliuev “in a series of poems [...] perhaps without even suspecting it himself, foretold no worse than Nostradamus several moments in the development of the nation’s history right up to the present” (Pereiaslov 129). An article by Vasily Ivanov in the newspaper *Severnıi kur'er* [Northern Courier] under the title “Pod iasnovi-

diashchim perom" [Under the clairvoyant pen]—a line from Kliuev's "'Ia zdes'" —otvetilo mne telo" ["I'm here," my body answered] (Kliuev 1999, 338–39)—even sees the poet's preoccupation with cultural associations between the Russian north and the Karelian Republic at the end of the twentieth century. Yet more telling is the appropriation of Kliuev's prophetic vision by cultural ideologues: Stanislav Kuniaev writes of Kliuev's "prophetic and preaching gift" in an introduction which clearly advocates a nationalist program for contemporary Russia (Kuniaev 1986, 17). At its most extreme, this version of Kliuev may be encountered among the leaders of the National Bolshevik movement, one of whom, Aleksandr Dugin, is the author of a "radio mystery," at one time available on the internet, and entitled "Nikolai Kliuev—Prorok sekretnoi Rossii" [Nikolai Kliuev—prophet of a secret Russia].

These are but a few examples of one of the frequently practiced appropriations of Nikolai Kliuev. Such accounts—often popular, sometimes populist, usually conservative in ideology, and sometimes even neo-fascist—have been strenuously, even stridently, resisted by Kliuev's most prominent reader among the card-carrying "philological elite," Konstantin Azadovsky (most obviously in his publications of "Gagar'ia sud'bina"), but their prominence may help to explain why Azadovsky is the only such figure to have shown much interest in the poet. It is also intriguing that Azadovsky, despite his obvious hostility to popular, nationalist appropriations of Kliuev, not only notes repeatedly, in his biography of the poet, the "prophetic" role ascribed to or claimed by Kliuev (Azadovskii 2004, 111, 114, 146, 167, 189, 202), but on one occasion acknowledges that several of Kliuev's dreams really were "prophetic" [*veshchie*, 187].

Indeed, notwithstanding populist appropriations, the prophetic interpretation of Kliuev is not to be neglected. While much of his prophetic discourse may be understood *in situ* as part of a complex fabric of textual, literary, and personal identities, it is also true that especially striking texts came to light at precisely the moment when their prophetic content might seem to be fulfilled. Moreover, they came to light in a manner bound to relocate them as, in a sense, texts of the *late twentieth century* (another familiar paradigm of Russian literary history—for example, similar observations, also not without prophetic coloring, might be made about some of the work of Platonov, an author with whom Kliuev has several significant points of contact in terms of manner, thematics, and identity). Moreover, and paradoxically, these publications of Kliuev were seen less as works of *belles lettres* belonging to an admittedly very particular late development of Russian Modernism, and more as texts which functioned somewhat in the manner imagined for pre-modern prophetic materials. Fragmentary in form, highly elusive and inconsistent in voice, referents, manner and style, sometimes comprising clear textual and cultural hybrids, and often

linked to oral as well as to written genres and presentation, these newly published texts fully justified such an approach, even if it might be somewhat reductive. Their fate had even been predicted—most conveniently—by the author himself. In *Pogorel'shchina* the narrator, *pesnopisets Nikolai* [the writer of songs Nikolai], cites his promise to his homeland:

<p>«Моя родимая земля, Не сетуй горько о невере, Я затворюсь в глухой пещере, Отрошу бороду до рук— Узнает изумленный внук, Что дед недаром клад копил И короб песенный зарыл, Когда дуванили дуван!...» (Kliuev 1999, 686)</p>	<p>“My native land, Do not complain too bitterly of my faithlessness, I'll retreat to a distant cave, Grow a beard down to my hands— An astonished grandson will realize That not in vain did the old man collect his treasure And bury a box of songs When the spoils were being divided!...”</p>
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In “Ia znaiu, rodiatsia pesni—” [I know, songs will be born, 1920], the poet is even chronologically specific:

<p>В девяносто девятое лето Заскрипит заклятый замок, И взбурлят рекой самоцветы Ослепительных вещей строк. (Kliuev 1999, 468)</p>	<p>In the year ninety-nine The enchanted lock will creak, And out will flood jewels Of blinding prophetic lines.</p>
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Once discourse is declared prophetic, it can almost always be declared fulfilled—and it should be duly noted that the first authoritative edition of Kliuev's verse is *Serdtshe edinoroga*, published, of course, in 1999.

In general, the story of Kliuev's prophetic discourse is predicated on loss—loss of that which is presupposed (a living context in high culture, and a sensitivity to the complexity of the synthetic, yet paradoxically *authentic* identities and texts created by the poet), and loss of the texts themselves, and even the poet himself. Recontextualized in the late twentieth century and the new millennium, what was initially figurative has become literal. Here is another example of that paradigm for the period—just as the Romantic and early Modernist interpretation of martyrdom is given bloody and widespread concreteness in the Soviet period, so too, in this example, the complexities of Kliuev's prophecies are, in the present of their discovery, often rendered all too literal by their partial accuracy. While this has given Kliuev an enthusiastic following, it must be said that the following is limited, sometimes eccentric, and even rebarbative in the extremes of the ideology of some (few) of its members. The very elements which appeal because of their apparent literalness to some readers must certainly repel others. There is, of course, yet another irony in the appropriation by the cultural right of a *homosexual martyr*, but that is yet another story.

Vytegra, the town in Kliuev's home region where the poet lived in the late

1910s and early 1920s, now houses a Kliuev museum, hosts an annual Kliuev symposium, and (remarkably for a town of fewer than 13,000 mostly not very prosperous inhabitants) regularly publishes Kliuev material in its newspaper and in special almanacs and museum publications. Although Kliuev was economical, at best, in references to the specific sites of his *petit pays* (his realization of northern cultural and geographic space is more abstract and general; and when he did write specifically of his life in Vytegra, he was often far from complimentary), the town today appropriates him with some enthusiasm and much specificity. The 1994 *Kliuevskie chteniia* [Kliuev symposium] went under the banner "On zhiv, Olonetskii vedun!" (the self-characterization from "Po zhizni raduites' so mnoi"), a suitably, if not transparently unproblematic, self-fulfilling prophecy. Indeed, as has been seen, quotations of Kliuev's fulfilled prophecies abound in treatments of the poet everywhere from Vytegra to Moscow, and beyond. But four years earlier, the local newspaper *Krasnoe znamia Vytegry* [Red banner of Vytegra; the name is unchanged to this day] had published an article entitled "A. V. Kirillova vspominaet" [A. V. Kirillova remembers], in which Kirillova commented as follows on the poem of 1918 addressed to her, which begins, it will be recalled, "Eta devushka umret v rodakh": "Kliuev turned out not to be a prophet, I had three children" (Kirillova; see also Kliuev 1999, 901). The seer of Olonia might well be said to be alive now in his texts and, institutionally, in his home region, but it is a slyly sobering reminder of the problems of prophecy to note that Anna Kirillova was herself alive sixty-two years after the poet had predicted her death in childbirth (and was still alive in 1999). Kirillova's little piece, published in a very small-circulation provincial newspaper, sounds a rare sobering note on Kliuev the prophet, and the only reason for its existence is that the "prophecy" in question was about an individual who happened to survive into the years of *glasnost'*. Her commentary should, nonetheless, serve as an important reminder that Kliuev's prophetic voice initially functioned first and foremost *artistically*, while its secondary role was to describe *the present*. Only posthumously, at the end of the twentieth century, did Kliuev the prophet come to be taken by so many of his readers as having accurately predicted the *future*—an interpretation that required them to neglect many "prophetic" moments in his verse, in order to emphasize only those that could be seen as fulfilled. This repositioning of Kliuev has probably done little to help his reputation within Russia's "philological elite," but it provides a striking illustration of the reading habits of a significant part of Russian society and another example of the paradigm of literalization which has repeatedly characterized Russian literary history since Modernism. Kliuev, whose prophetic descriptions of loss and destruction had artistic force in his lifetime, became, posthumously, a literal prophet of loss, his status enhanced by his own tragic loss of life, the loss of the culture which he had mythologized, and the disintegration of the state which had kept his writing from its natural readership.

NOTES

This article is a significantly revised version of a paper initially given at the symposium “Visions of the Future in Russian Culture,” University of Exeter, UK, April 18–19, 2001. The author is grateful for the support of IREX, the Center for Russian and East European Studies and the Slavic Department at the University of Michigan, without which research for this article and participation in the Exeter symposium would not have been possible.

- 1 Pamela Davidson’s articles on the nineteenth-century literary tradition (Davidson 2002, 2003) illustrate the paradoxes, complexities, and ideological problems of the appropriation of the idea of prophet to the image of Russian poet. W. F. Ryan surveys divination, omens, predictions from dreams and other phenomena (94–163). Both high-cultural and popular fascination with prophecy and related phenomena is abundantly evident in Russia to this day, as may be suggested by a simple search on the World Wide Web: the search engine www.yandex.ru produced 658,816 pages and 2176 sites for the keyword *prorochestvo* [prophecy] on May 9, 2005.
- 2 The internet site www.yandex.ru produced 4511 pages and 980 sites for the combination *prorochestvo* and Pushkin on May 9, 2005; the results for Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, and Kliuev on the same day were, respectively: 44 and 29; 6601 and 1272; 3247 and 567. On using books—for example, of poetry—for divination, see Wigzell, 173, 222 (endnote 13). When I was studying at Voronezh State University in the late 1970s, collections of poetry were frequently used for divination—the person whose fortune was to be told chose a page number, and then a line number. Prose was also used, but less frequently.
- 3 The most accessible and complete account of Kliuev’s life is to be found in Konstantin Azadovskiy’s *Zhizn’ Nikolaia Kliueva*.
- 4 *Serdise edinoroga* (Kliuev 1999, 107–8) has a most unfortunate misprint in line two, which has been corrected here. English translations of Kliuev’s verse throughout are my own.
- 5 The discovery of *Kain* appears to have been announced in the (neo-fascist) newspaper *Den’*, no. 22 (May 31—June 6, 1992); the chapter in the Kuniaevs’ *Rasterzannnye teni* first appeared under the pseudonym S. Volkov in *Nash sovremennik* (1993). The *Den’* publication is assumed from Kravchenko, 344.
- 6 English text (in slightly different translation)—Shentalinsky 1993, 200.

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TITLE: Nikolai Kliuev—Prophet of Loss
SOURCE: Slavic East Eur J 49 no4 Wint 2005
WN: 0534900671006

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