Elena Schwarz is one of Russia’s best-known and most accomplished contemporary poets. A leading Petersburg author, she was one of the most prominent “underground” poets in the final years of the period of “Stagnation”. Since the beginning of the glasnost’ period she has been very widely published in her native country.

Poet and critic Mikhail Aizenberg, lecturing at Michigan in 1994:

“Elena Schwarz was one of the two acknowledged leaders of the second generation of ‘Leningraders’. And justly so. Schwarz is a very interesting poet, but that she is a remarkable person is even more evident. Her poetry is a unique fixation of personal, basically spiritual, experience, for which verse form seems too cramped. It is interesting that, in her search for liberation, Schwarz looks back, to the beginning, to spiritual verses (dukhovnye stikhi) …, to Russian syllabic poetry. Her meter is syllabically uneven, her rhymes are imperfect, almost rhymoids (rifmoidy). But her metaphors are lucid and childishly simple, and her acutely physiological descriptions give these anxious hallucinations a strange cogency. Her poems are always the poems of Elena Schwarz, and not just poetry in which the author is dissolved and forgotten, tending to anonymity.”

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