

Upon whose vastness he is like a leaf.  
What are the ends and purposes of song,  
Save as a bugle at the lips of life  
To sound reveillé to a drowsing world  
When some great deed is rising like the sun?

Where are those others whom your deed inspired  
To deeds and words that were themselves a deed?  
Those who believed in death have gone with death  
To the gray crags of immortality;  
Those who believed in life have gone with life  
To the red halls of spiritual death.

And you? But what is death or life to you?  
Only a weapon in the hand of faith  
To cleave a way for beings yet unborn  
To a far freedom you will never share!  
Freedom of body is an empty shell  
Wherein men crawl whose souls are held with gyves  
For Freedom is a spirit, and she dwells  
As often in a jail as on the hills.  
In all the world this day there is no soul  
Freer than you, Breshkovskaya, as you stand  
Facing the future in your narrow cell.  
For you are free of self and free of fear,  
Those twin-born shades that lie in wait for man  
When he steps out upon the wind-blown road  
That leads to human greatness and to pain.

Take in your hand once more the pilgrim's staff —  
Your delicate hand misshapen from the nights  
In Kara's mines; bind on your unbent back,  
That long has borne the burdens of the race,