

Lara Bargilly

Poems by the poetess dedicated to her father, Symeon Volchkov

Letter to the other side

*You who loved life above all things
And searched out Beauty for its sake alone
Must I believe that your dear soul took wing
And flew away into the far unknown?*

*You who spoke with flowers and with birds
Who sighed for love and for sweet nature's sphere
You left behind rare brushstrokes of your time
Which move all those who see them unto tears.*

*Must I believe our dialogue has ended?
In monologues alone I speak to you!
Yet Death has not deprived me of your presence,
Your soul speaks in your art, through and through.*

*You live for ever, though I have lost your sun,
Which warmed my soul and comforted my heart.
And I, who while you lived denied you nothing,
Find healing in the works you left, your art.*

*Though I soak up the warmth from planet Sun
Your own sun I will hold eternally.
But drinking drops of sorrow from the moon,
I take my path without you, bitterly.*

11/04/03, Nicosia

Lara Bargilly

Great Heart

To my unforgettable father, Symeon Volchkov.

**"In your great heart you held the ends of Earth
Without a thought for any recompense."**

"I give, therefore I am..." Nikos Kazantzakis

*You, who held all Cyprus in your heart
And in your generous palm cradled her light,
Which shines in your rare legacy of art,
With all its colours and its hues still bright.*

*You came and left, true friend yet stranger.
The people loved you, Pharisees were mute.
One day you took flight, your heart was bitter,
You fell, bright Sun! And the hypocrites
Placed on your head the crown of thorns.*

*Great heart! May never we forget you!
Heaven erased all limits for your sake,
Made them invisible, and vanquished
Speed and distance and time's ache.*

*Great heart! You beat for those who knew you,
And for those you did not know, yet loved.
By celebrating life, with love you feed these lives,
And live on after sinking, like the sun!
Truly immortal, as the souls of angels!*

***In your great heart you held the ends of Earth
Without a thought for any recompense.***

*All this, Father, illuminates my soul,
As I look back over the lives we led!*

Lara Bargilly

*To my father,
the never-to-be-forgotten painter and poet, Symeon Volchkov
(this dedication was read at the literary memorial service
which was held on the 3rd anniversary of his death)*

*I sense you everywhere, Father, the fragrance of your soul
Inspires us, like the scent of lily's amaranthine flower.
In our time we are living a calamity so foul,
When truth is murdered by masked men of power.*

*But whoever died on Golgotha for Truth's sake
Has gathered so much love into their breast
By searching for eternal Beauty in their Art,
They will find, I know, in Paradise a nest.*

12/02/06, Nicosia

Lara Bargilly

*To my father, never-to-be-forgotten,
the painter and poet, Symeon Volchkov*

*"What mean wealth and glory to me?..."
Sappho*

A FEAT OF UNSELFISHNESS

*I do not search for laurels or for wealth,
I am glad I lived, and battled against lies.
Your approval is what gives me joy and strength,
I expect to gain nothing more from life.*

*And when I painted Beauty, in full colour,
I gave my soul and insight, without pretence.
When the divine light filled me with courage
And patience, I sought no further recompense.*

*And what now shall I say to all those critics,
Who joined the horned one's masquerade?
I did not worry for myself, but for those cynics
Whose devilish ambitions he inspired.*

*He tells them coal is stars and they believe it,
He upends the face of Earth the other way.
I will choose animals as friends and allies,
So long as his dark dominion holds sway.*

20/06/2001, Λευκωσία

Lara Bargilly

1st LAMENT

To my never-to-be-forgotten father, Symeon Volchkov

*Where shall I find a minstrel,
With the sweetest-sounding voice,
To sooth away my sorrows
And let my bleeding soul rejoice?*

*Where is the troubadour who,
With hushed and quiet phrase,
Without beating a tambourine,
Will sing the poet's praise?*

*I lost - but not in wars -
Husband, brother, mother,
And the unbridled wind
Then took away my father.*

*Yes, Father has gone -
The closest of companions.
He was the sweetest man,
But his destiny was tragic.*

*And I was left an orphan,
This is my own tragedy,
A house full of ghosts,
The missing parts of me.*

*The boatman on the bank
Already lay in wait,
Toiling day and night,
Old people cannot wait.*

*They are in haste to finish
The works they had begun
It's not easy to feel joy -
When the journey was so long.*

*If only they all knew
How much love lay unseen
Behind conflicts in full view.
I love you, you loved me.*

*You knew, of course, dear Father,
That all worldly beings fall.
And a walk into the unknown
Lies in wait for one and all.*

*Which is why you were troubled
For the creations you were leaving.
Your heroic nature struggled
Once again, in your grieving.*

*Your Life has come full circle,
Master! I am filled with wonder.
Who will keep up your tradition?
One, perhaps, much younger.*

*You will always be the master,
Your spirit guides us onward.
The work you left us matters
In unmasking every falsehood!*

08/07/2003, Λευκωσία

Lara Bargilly

2nd LAMENT

To my father, the never-to-be-forgotten painter and poet, Symeon Volchkov

*O Father! If only we could turn back time,
I would leave no room at all for pain.*

*Now you're not here with me, the roads have darkened,
The altar at which I worshipped daily, gone.
To whom shall I say: "Father, forgive me!"
We wounded one another, but love always won!*

*And yet I should have had so much more patience,
Such as needed by the carers, and the saintly,
Why, while you lived, should I embitter you?
I shall not have you a second time beside me.*

*My eyes have now been sealed by pain and anguish,
They do not permit the sun to smile on me.
But Repentance cleanses those who know what love is,
And let the Holy Spirit into their psyche.*

*O my Father! If only we could turn back time,
I would leave no room at all for pain!*

30/10/2005, Λευκωσία

Lara Bargilly

DIALOGUE WITH MY FATHER

*- You gave me life
And taught me to love my country.
But if we travel a world without frontiers*
We will be wrecked at sea.*

*- God is our frontier.
He is our loadstar,
And our compass!*

Lara Bargilly

**without frontiers - the poet means globalisation, which is the 'Babel' of our time, that is, the greatest confusion every lived by humankind, and self-imposed. Note that in Hebrew the word means "confusion".*

*All I ever wanted -
was to be my father's daughter...*

*Father! So I am the daughter of a painter!
I never learnt to paint, except with words.
Yet it is you, my creator, I wish to illustrate,
In every verse of poetry I write!*

Lara Bargilly

poems translated by Susan Papas